

THE
VICAR
OF
WAKEFIELD:
A
T A L E

SUPPOSED TO BE WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

Sperate miseri, cavete felices.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOLUME SECOND.

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WAKELIKE

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ANSWER QUESTIONS

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THE
VICKAR
OF
WAKEFIELD.

CHAP. XX.

The history of a philosophic vagabond, pursuing novelty, but losing content.

AFTER we had supped, Mrs Arnold politely offered to send a couple of her footmen for my son's baggage; which he at first seemed to decline; but, upon her pressing the request, he was obliged to inform her, that a stick and a wallet were all the moveable things upon this earth that he could boast of. "Why, ay, my son," cried I, "you left me but poor, and poor I find you are come back; and yet I make no doubt you have seen a great deal of the world." "Yes, Sir," replied my son; "but travelling after Fortune is not the way to secure her; and, indeed, of late, I have desisted from the pursuit." "I fancy, Sir," cried Mrs Arnold, "that the account of your adventures would be amusing: the first part of them I have often heard from my

" niece ; but, could the company prevail for the rest,
" it would be an additional obligation." — " Ma-
" dam," replied my son, " I promise you, the pleasure
you have in hearing, will not be half so great as my
vanity in reciting them ; and yet, in the whole nar-
ative, I can scarce promise you one adventure, as my
account is rather of what I saw, than what I did.
The first misfortune of my life, which you all know,
was great ; but, though it distressed, it could not sink
me. No person ever had a better knack at hoping
than I. The less kind I found Fortune at one time,
the more I expected from her at another ; and, being
now at the bottom of her wheel, every new revolution
might lift, but could not depress me. I proceeded,
therefore, towards London, in a fine morning, no way
uneasy about to-morrow, but cheerful as the birds
that carol'd by the road, and comforted myself with
reflecting, that London was the true mart, where a-
bilities of every kind were sure of meeting distinction
and reward.

" Upon my arrival in town, Sir, my first care was
to deliver your letter of recommendation to our cousin,
who was himself in little better circumstances than I.
My first scheme, you know, Sir, was to be usher at
an academy, and I asked his advice in the affair. Our
cousin received the proposal with a true Sardonic grin."
" Ay," cried he, " this is indeed a very pretty ca-
reer that has been chalked out for you. I have been
an usher at a boarding-school myself ; and may I die
by an anodyne necklace, but I had rather be an under-
turnkey.

turnkey in Newgate. I was up early and late: I was brow-beat by the master, hated for my ugly face by the mistress, worried by the boys within, and never permitted to stir out to meet civility abroad. But are you sure you are fit for a school? Let me examine you a little. Have you been bred apprentice to the business? No. Then you wont do for a school. Can you dress the boys hair? No. Then you wont do for a school. Have you had the small pox? No. Then you wont do for a school. Can you ly three in a bed? No. Then you will never do for a school. Have you got a good stomach? Yes. Then you will by no means do for a school. No, Sir, if you are for a genteel, easy profession, bind yourself seven years as an apprentice to turn a cutler's wheel; but avoid a school by any means. Yet 'come,' continued he, "I see you are a lad of spirit and some learning: what do you think of commencing author, like me? You have read in books, no doubt, of men of genius starving at the trade: at present, I'll show you forty very dull fellows about town that live by it in opulence. All honest jog-trot men, who go on smoothly and dully, and write history and politics, and are praised; men, Sir, who, had they been bred cobblers, would all their lives have only mended shoes, but never made them."

" Finding that there was no great degree of gentility affixed to the character of an usher, I resolved to accept his proposal; and, having the highest respect for literature, hailed the *antiqua mater* of Grub-

street with reverence. I thought it my glory to pursue a tract which Dryden and Otway trod before me. I considered the goddess of this region as the parent of excellence; and however an intercourse with the world might give us good sense, the poverty she granted I supposed to be the nurse of genius! Big with these reflections, I sat down, and finding that the best things remained to be said on the wrong side, I resolved to write a book that should be wholly new. I therefore dressed up three paradoxes with some ingenuity. They were false, indeed, but they were new. The jewels of truth have been so often imported by others, that nothing was left for me to import, but some splendid things, that, at a distance, looked every bit as well. Witness, ye Powers, what fancied importance sat perched upon my quill while I was writing. The whole learned world, I made no doubt, would rise to oppose my systems; but then I was prepared to oppose the whole learned world. Like the porcupine, I sat self-collected, with a quill pointed against every opposer."

"Well said, my boy," cried I; "and what subject did you treat upon? I hope you did not pass over the importance of monogamy. But I interrupt, go on: you published your paradoxes; well, and what did the learned world say to your paradoxes?"

"Sir," replied my son, "the learned world said nothing to my paradoxes; nothing at all, Sir. Every man of them was employed in praising his friends and himself, or condemning his enemies; and unfor-
tunately,

nately, as I had neither, I suffered the cruellest mortification, neglect.

" As I was meditating one day in a coffee-house on the fate of my paradoxes, a little man happening to enter the room, placed himself in the box before me; and, after some preliminary discourse, finding me to be a scholar, drew out a bundle of proposals, begging me to subscribe to a new edition he was going to give the world of Propertius, with notes. This demand necessarily produced a reply, that I had no money; and that confession led him to inquire into the nature of my expectations. Finding that my expectations were just as great as my purse, I see, cried he, you are unacquainted with the town, I'll teach you a part of it. Look at these proposals; upon these very proposals I have subsisted very comfortably for twelve years. The moment a nobleman returns from his travels, a Creolian arrives from Jamaica, or a Dowager from her country-seat, I strike for a subscription. I first besiege their hearts with flattery, and then pour in my proposals at the breach. If they subscribe readily the first time, I renew my request to beg a dedication-fee. If they let me have that, I smite them once more for engraving their coat of arms at the top. Thus, continued he, I live by vanity, and laugh at it. But, between ourselves, I am now too well known; I should be glad to borrow your face a bit: a nobleman of distinction has just returned from Italy; my face is familiar to his porter; but if you bring this copy of verses, my life for it you succeed, and we divide the spoil."

" Blefs

THE VICAR OF

“ Bless us, George,” cried I, “ and is this the em-
“ ployment of poets now? Do men of their exalt-
“ ed talents thus stoop to beggary? Can they so far
“ disgrace their calling, as to make a vile traffic of
“ praise for bread?”

“ O no, Sir,” returned he; “ a true poet can ne-
ver be so base; for, wherever there is genius, there is
pride. The creatures I now describe, are only beg-
gars in rhyme. The real poet, as he braves every
hardship for fame, so he is equally a coward to con-
tempt; and none but those who are unworthy pro-
tection condescend to solicit it.”

“ Having a mind too proud to stoop to such indig-
nities, and yet a fortune too humble to hazard a se-
cond attempt for fame, I was now obliged to take a
middle course, and write for bread. But I was un-
qualified for a profession where mere industry alone
was to ensure success. I could not suppress my lurk-
ing passion for applause; but usually consumed that
time in efforts after excellence, which takes up but
little room, when it should have been more ad-
vantageously employed in the diffusive productions of
fruitful mediocrity. My little piece would therefore
come forth in the mist of periodical publication, un-
noticed and unknown. The public were more im-
portantly employed, than to observe the easy sim-
plicity of my style, or the harmony of my periods.
Sheet after sheet was thrown off to oblivion. My
essays were buried among the essays upon liberty,
eastern tales, and cures for the bite of a mad dog:

while Philautos, Philalethes, Philelutheros, and Philanthropos, all wrote better, because they wrote faster than I.

"Now, therefore, I began to associate with none but disappointed authors like myself, who praised, deplored, and despised each other. The satisfaction we found in every celebrated writer's attempts was inversely as their merits. I found that no genius in another could please me. My unfortunate paradoxes had entirely dried up that source of comfort. I could neither read nor write with satisfaction; for excellence in another was my aversion, and writing was my trade.

"In the midst of these gloomy reflections, as I was one day sitting on a bench in St James's Park, a young gentleman of distinction, who had been my intimate acquaintance at the university, approached me. We saluted each other with some hesitation; he almost ashamed of being known to one who made so shabby an appearance, and I afraid of a repulse. But my suspicions soon vanished; for Ned Thornhill was at the bottom a very good-natured fellow."

"What did you say, George?" interrupted I; "Thornhill, was not that his name? It can certainly be no other than my landlord."—"Bless me," cried Mrs. Arnold, "is Mr. Thornhill so near a neighbour of yours? He has long been a friend in our family, and we expect a visit from him shortly."

"My

" My friend's first care," continued my son, " was to alter my appearance by a very fine suit of his own clothes, and then I was admitted to his table, upon the footing of half friend, half underling. My business was to attend him at auctions, to put him in spirits when he sat for his picture, to take the left hand in his chariot when not filled by another, and to assist at tattering a kip, as the phrase was, when we had a mind for a frolic. Besides these, I had twenty other little employments in the family. I was to do many small things without bidding; to carry the corkscrew; to stand godfather to all the butler's children; to sing when I was bid; to be never out of humour; always to be humble; and, if I could, to be very happy.

" In this honourable post, however, I was not without a rival. A captain of marines, who was formed for the place by nature, opposed me in my patron's affections. His mother had been laundress to a man of quality, and thus he early acquired a taste for pimping and pedigree. As this gentleman made it the study of his life to be acquainted with lords, though he was dismissed from several for his stupidity, yet he found many of them, who were as dull as himself, that permitted his affiduities. As flattery was his trade, he practised it with the easiest address imaginable; but it came awkward and stiff from me: and as, every day, my patron's desire of flattery increased; so, every hour, being better acquainted with his defects, I became more unwilling to give it. Thus I

was

was once more fairly going to give up the field to the Captain, when my friend found occasion for my assistance. This was nothing less than to fight a duel for him, with a gentleman whose sister it was pretended he had used ill. I readily complied with his request; and though I see you are displeased at my conduct, yet as it was a debt indispensably due to friendship, I could not refuse. I undertook the affair, disarmed my antagonist, and soon after had the pleasure of finding that the lady was only a woman of the town, and the fellow her bully and a sharper. This piece of service was repaid with the warmest professions of gratitude; but as my friend was to leave town in a few days, he knew no other method of serving me, but by recommending me to his uncle Sir William Thornhill, and another nobleman of great distinction, who enjoyed a post under the government. When he was gone, my first care was to carry his recommendatory letter to his uncle, a man whose character for every virtue was universal, yet just. I was received by his servants with the most hospitable smiles; for the looks of the domestics ever transmit their master's benevolence. Being shown into a grand apartment, where Sir William soon came to me, I delivered my message and letter, which he read; and after pausing some minutes, Pray, Sir, cried he, inform me what you have done for my kinsman, to deserve this warm recommendation? But I suppose, Sir, I guess your merits, you have fought for him; and so you would expect a reward from me, for being the instrument of his vices.

I wish, sincerely wish, that my present refusal may be some punishment for your guilt; but still more, that it may be some inducement to your repentance. The severity of this rebuke I bore patiently, because I knew it was just. My whole expectations now, therefore, lay in my letter to the great man. As the doors of the nobility are almost ever beset with beggars, all ready to thrust in some sly petition, I found it no easy matter to gain admittance. However, after bribing the servants with half my worldly fortune, I was at last shown into a spacious apartment, my letter being previously sent up for his Lordship's inspection. During this anxious interval, I had full time to look round me. Every thing was grand, and of happy contrivance; the painting, the furniture, the gilding, petrified me with awe, and raised my idea of the owner. Ah! thought I to myself, how very great must the possessor of all these things be, who carries in his head the business of the state, and whose house displays half the wealth of a kingdom: sure his genius must be unfathomable! During these awful reflections, I heard a step come heavily forward. Ah! this is the great man himself! No, it was only a chambermaid. Another foot was heard soon after. This must be He! No, it was only the great man's valet-de-chambre. At last his lordship actually made his appearance. Are you, cried he, the bearer of this here letter? I answered with a bow. I learn by this, continued he, as how that——But just at this instant a servant delivered him a card, and without taking farther notice, he went out

of the room, and left me to digest my own happiness at leisure. I saw no more of him, till told by a footman, that his Lordship was going to his coach at the door. Down I immediately followed, and joined my voice to that of three or four more, who came, like me, to petition for favours. His Lordship, however, went too fast for us, and was gaining his chariot-door with large strides, when I haled out to know if I was to have any reply. He was by this time got in, and muttered an answer, half of which only I heard, the other half was lost in the rattling of his chariot-wheels. I stood for some time with my neck stretched out, in the posture of one that was listening to catch the glorious sounds, till, looking round me, I found myself alone at his Lordship's gate.

"My patience," continued my son, "was now quite exhausted: stung with the thousand indignities I had met with, I was willing to cast myself away, and only wanted the gulph to receive me. I regarded myself as one of those vile things that nature designed should be thrown by into her lumber-room, there to perish in obscurity. I had still, however, half a guinea left, and of that I thought Fortune herself should not deprive me: but in order to be sure of this, I was resolved to go instantly and spend it while I had it, and then trust to occurrences for the rest. As I was going along with this resolution, it happened that Mr Crispe's office seemed invitingly open to give me a welcome reception. In this office Mr Crispe kindly offers all his Majesty's subjects a generous promise of thirty

pounds a-year; for which promise all they give in return is their liberty for life, and permission to let him transport them to America as slaves. I was happy at finding a place where I could lose my fears in desperation, and entered this cell (for it had the appearance of one) with the devotion of a monastic. Here I found a number of poor creatures all in circumstances like myself, expecting the arrival of Mr Crispe, presenting a true epitome of English impatience. Each untractable soul at variance with Fortune, wreaked her injuries on their own hearts: but Mr Crispe at last came down, and all our murmurs were hushed. He deigned to regard me with an air of peculiar approbation; and indeed he was the first man, who, for a month past, talked to me with smiles. After a few questions, he found I was fit for every thing in the world. He paused a while upon the properest means of providing for me; and slapping his forehead as if he had found it, assured me, that there was at that time an embassy talked of, from the synod of Pennsylvania to the Chickasaw Indians, and that he would use his interest to get me made secretary. I knew in my own heart that the fellow lyed, and yet his promise gave me pleasure, there was something so magnificent in the sound. I fairly, therefore, divided my half guinea, one half of which went to be added to his thirty thousand pounds; and with the other half I resolved to go to the next tavern, to be there more happy than he.

“ As I was going out with that resolution, I was met at the door by the captain of a ship, with whom I

had

had formerly some little acquaintance, and he agreed to be my companion over a bowl of punch. As I never chose to make a secret of my circumstances, he assured me, that I was upon the very point of ruin, in listening to the office-keeper's promises; for that he only designed to sell me to the plantations. But, continued he, I fancy you might, by a much shorter voyage, be very easily put into a genteel way of bread. Take my advice. My ship sails to-morrow for Amsterdam: What if you go in her as a passenger? The moment you land, all you have to do is to teach the Dutchmen English, and I'll warrant you'll get pupils and money enough. I suppose you understand English, added he, by this time, or the duce is in it. I confidently assured him of that; but expressed a doubt whether the Dutch would be willing to learn English. He affirmed with an oath, that they were fond of it to distraction; and upon that affirmation I agreed with his proposal, and embarked the next day, to teach the Dutch English in Holland. The wind was fair, our voyage short, and after having paid my passage with half my moveables, I found myself, fallen as from the skies, a stranger in one of the principal streets of Amsterdam. In this situation, I was unwilling to let any time pass unemployed in teaching; I addressed myself therefore to two or three of those I met, whose appearance seemed most promising; but it was impossible to make ourselves mutually understood. It was not till this very moment I recollect, that, in order to teach Dutchmen English, it was necessary that they

should first teach me Dutch. How I came to overlook so obvious an objection, is to me amazing; but certain it is I overlooked it.

“ This scheme thus blown up, I had some thoughts of fairly shipping back to England again; but happening into company with an Irish student, who was returning from Louvain, our conversation turning upon topics of literature, (for by the way it may be observed, that I always forgot the meanness of my circumstances when I could converse upon such subjects,) from him I learned, that there were not two men in his whole university who understood Greek. This amazed me. I instantly resolved to travel to Louvain, and there live by teaching Greek; and in this design I was heartened by my brother student, who threw out some hints that a fortune might be got by it.

“ I set boldly forward the next morning. Every day lessened the burden of my moveables, like *Aesop* and his basket of bread; for I paid them for my lodgings to the Dutch as I travelled on. When I came to Louvain, I was resolved not to go fneaking to the lower professors, but openly tendered my talents to the principal himself. I went, had admittance, and offered him my service as a master of the Greek language, which I had been told was a desideratum in his university. The principal seemed at first to doubt of my abilities; but of these I offered to convince him, by turning a part of any Greek author he should fix upon into Latin. Finding me perfectly earnest in my proposal, he addressed me thus: “ You see me

“ young

young man, continued he, I never learned Greek, and I don't find that I have ever missed it. I have had a doctor's cap and gown without Greek; I have ten thousand florins a-year without Greek; I eat heartily without Greek: and in short, continued he, as I don't know Greek, I do not believe there is any good in it."

" I was now too far from home to think of returning; so I resolved to go forward. I had some knowledge of music, with a tolerable voice, and now turned what was once my amusement into a present means of subsistence. I passed among the harmless peasants of Flanders, and among such of the French as were poor enough to be very merry; for I ever found them sprightly in proportion to their wants. Whenever I approached a peasant's house towards night-fall, I played one of my most merry tunes, and that procured me not only a lodging, but subsistence for the next day. I once or twice attempted to play for people of fashion, but they always thought my performance odious, and never rewarded me even with a trifle. This was to me the more extraordinary, as whenever I used, in better days, to play for company, when playing was my amusement, my music never failed to throw them into raptures, and the ladies especially; but as it was now my only means, it was received with contempt: a proof how ready the world is to under-rate those talents by which a man is supported.

" In this manner I proceeded to Paris, with no design but just to look about me, and then to go forward.

ward. The people of Paris are much fonder of strangers that have money than of those that have wit. As I could not boast much of either, I was no great favourite. After walking about the town four or five days, and seeing the outsides of the best houses, I was preparing to leave this retreat of venal hospitality, when, passing through one of the principal streets, whom should I meet but our cousin, to whom you first recommended me. This meeting was very agreeable to me, and I believe not displeasing to him. He inquired into the nature of my journey to Paris, and informed me of his own business there, which was to collect pictures, medals, intaglios, and antiques of all kinds, for a gentleman in London, who had just slept into taste and a large fortune. I was the more surprised at seeing our cousin pitched upon for this office, as he himself had often assured me he knew nothing of the matter. Upon asking how he had been taught the art of a connoisseur so very suddenly, he assured me that nothing was more easy. The whole secret consisted in a strict adherence to two rules: the one always to observe, that the picture might have been better if the painter had taken more pains; and the other, to praise the works of Pietro Perugino. But, says he, as I once taught you how to be an author in London, I'll now undertake to instruct you in the art of picture-buying at Paris.

“With this proposal I very readily closed, as it was a living; and now all my ambition was to live.

I went therefore to his lodgings, improved my dress by his assistance, and, after some time, accompanied him to auctions of pictures, where the English gentry were expected to be purchasers. I was not a little surprised at his intimacy with people of the best fashion, who referred themselves to his judgment upon every picture or medal, as to an unerring standard of taste. He made very good use of my assistance upon these occasions; for, when asked his opinion, he would gravely take me aside, and ask mine; shrug, look wise, return, and assure the company, that he could give no opinion upon an affair of so much importance. Yet there was sometimes an occasion for a more supported assurance. I remember to have seen him, after giving his opinion that the colouring of a picture was not mellow enough, very deliberately take a brush with brown varnish that was accidentally lying by, and rub it over the piece with great composure before all the company, and then ask if he had not improved the tints?

“ When he had finished his commission in Paris, he left me strongly recommended to several men of distinction, as a person very proper for a travelling tutor: and, after some time, I was employed in that capacity by a gentleman who brought his ward to Paris, in order to set him forward on his tour through Europe. I was to be the young gentleman’s governor, but with a proviso, that he should always be permitted to govern himself. My pupil, in fact, understood the art of guiding, in money concerns, much better

than

than I. He was heir to a fortune of about two hundred thousand pounds, left him by an uncle in the West Indies ; and his guardians, to qualify him for the management of it, had bound him apprentice to an attorney. Thus, avarice was his prevailing passion : all his questions on the road were, how money might be saved ? which was the least expensive course of travel ? whether any thing could be bought that would turn to account when disposed of again in London ? Such curiosities on the way as could be seen for nothing he was ready enough to look at ; but if the sight of them was to be paid for, he usually asserted, that he had been told they were not worth seeing. He never paid a bill, that he would not observe how amazingly expensive travelling was ; and all this, though he was not yet twenty-one. When arrived at Leghorn, as we took a walk to look at the port and shipping, he inquired the expence of the passage by sea home to England. This, he was informed, was but a trifle, compared to his returning by land ; he was therefore unable to withstand the temptation ; so, paying me the small part of my salary that was due, he took leave, and embarked with only one attendant for London.

“ I now, therefore, was left once more upon the world at large ; but then it was a thing I was used to. However, my skill in music could avail me nothing, in a country where every peasant was a better musician than I ; but, by this time, I had acquired another talent, which answered my purpose as well, and

and this was a skill in disputation. In all the foreign universities and convents, there are, upon certain days, philosophical theses maintained against every adventitious disputant; for which, if the champion opposes with any dexterity, he can claim a gratuity in money, a dinner, and a bed for one night. In this manner, therefore, I fought my way towards England, walked along from city to city, examined mankind more nearly, and, if I may so express it, saw both sides of the picture. My remarks, however, are but few. I found that monarchy was the best government for the poor to live in, and commonwealths for the rich. I found that riches, in general, were, in every country, another name for freedom; and that no man is so fond of liberty himself, as not to be desirous of subjecting the will of some individuals in society to his own.

“ Upon my arrival in England, I resolved to pay my respects first to you, and then to enlist as a volunteer in the first expedition that was going forward; but, on my journey down, my resolutions were changed, by meeting an old acquaintance, who, I found, belonged to a company of comedians, that were going to make a summer campaign in the country. The company seemed not much to disapprove of me for an associate. They all, however, apprised me of the importance of the task at which I aimed: that the public was a many-headed monster, and that only such as had very good heads could please it: that acting was not to be learned in a day: and that, without

out some traditional shrugs, which had been on the stage, and only on the stage, these hundred years, I could never pretend to please. The next difficulty was in fitting me with parts, as almost every character was in keeping. I was driven, for some time, from one character to another, till at last Horatio was fixed upon, which the presence of the present company has happily hindered me from acting."

C H A P. XXL

The short continuance of friendship amongst the vicars, which is coeval only with mutual satisfaction.

MY son's account was too long to be delivered at once; the first part of it was begun that night, and he was concluding the rest after dinner the next day, when the appearance of Mr Thornhill's equipage at the door seemed to make a pause in the general satisfaction. The butler, who was now become my friend in the family, informed me with a whisper, that the Squire had already made some overtures to Miss Wilmot, and that her aunt and uncle seemed highly to approve the match. Upon Mr Thornhill's entering, he seemed, at seeing my son and me, to start back;

back; but I readily imputed that to surprise, and not displeasure. However, upon our advancing to salute him, he returned our greeting with the most apparent candour; and, after a short time, his presence served only to increase the general good humour.

After tea, he called me aside, to enquire after my daughter; but upon my informing him that my inquiry was unsuccessful, he seemed greatly surprised; adding, that he had been since frequently at my house, in order to comfort the rest of my family, whom he left perfectly well. He then asked if I had communicated her misfortune to Miss Wilmot, or my son; and upon my replying that I had not told them as yet, he greatly approved my prudence and precaution, desiring me by all means to keep it a secret: "For, " at best," cried he, " it is but divulging one's own " infamy; and perhaps Miss Livy may not be so " guilty as we all imagine." We were here interrupted by a servant who came to ask the Squire in, to stand up at country-dances; so that he left me quite pleased with the interest he seemed to take in my concerns. His addresses, however, to Miss Wilmot were too obvious to be mistaken; and yet she seemed not perfectly pleased; but bore them rather in compliance to the will of her aunt, than from real inclination. I had even the satisfaction to see her lavish some kind looks upon my unfortunate son, which the other could neither extort by his fortune nor affiduity. Mr Thornhill's seeming composure, however, not a little surprised me: we had now continued here a week, at the
pressing

pressing instances of Mr Arnold; but each day the more tenderness Miss Wilmot showed my son, Mr Thornhill's friendship seemed proportionably to increase for him.

He had formerly made us the most kind assurances of using his interest to serve the family; but now his generosity was not confined to promises alone. The morning I designed for my departure, Mr Thornhill came to me with looks of real pleasure, to inform me of a piece of service he had done for his friend George. This was nothing less than his having procured him an ensign's commission in one of the regiments that was going to the West Indies, for which he had promised but one hundred pounds, his interest having been sufficient to get an abatement of the other two. "As for this trifling piece of service," continued the young gentleman, "I desire no other reward but the pleasure of having served my friend; and as for the hundred pounds to be paid, if you are unable to raise it yourselves, I will advance it, and you shall repay me at your leisure." This was a favour we wanted words to express our sense of: I readily, therefore, gave my bond for the money, and testified as much gratitude as if I never intended to pay.

George was to depart for town the next day, to secure his commission, in pursuance of his generous patron's directions, who judged it highly expedient to use dispatch, lest, in the meantime, another should step in with more advantageous proposals. The next morning, therefore, our young soldier was early prepared

pared for his departure, and seemed the only person among us that was not affected by it: Neither the fatigues and dangers he was going to encounter, nor the friends and mistress (for Miss Wilmot actually loved him) he was leaving behind, any way damped his spirits. After he had taken leave of the rest of the company, I gave him all I had, my blessing. "And now, my boy," cried I, "thou art going to fight for thy country; remember how thy brave grandfather fought for his sacred king, when loyalty among Britons was a virtue. Go, my boy, and imitate him in all but his misfortunes, if it was a misfortune to die with Lord Falkland. Go, my boy, and if you fall, though distant, exposed and unwept by those that love you, the most precious tears are those with which heaven bedews the unburied head of a soldier."

The next morning I took leave of the good family, that had been kind enough to entertain me so long, not without several expressions of gratitude to Mr Thornhill for his late bounty. I left them in the enjoyment of all that happiness which affluence and good breeding procure, and returned towards home, despairing of ever finding my daughter more, but sending a sigh to heaven to spare and to forgive her. I was now come within about twenty miles of home, having hired an horse to carry me, as I was yet but weak, and comforted myself with the hopes of soon seeing all I held dearest upon earth. But the night coming on, I put up at a little public-house by the

road side, and asked for the landlord's company over a pint of wine. We sat beside his kitchen fire, which was the best room in the house, and chatted on politics and the news of the country. We happened, among other topics, to talk of young Squire Thornhill, whom the host assured me was hated as much as his uncle Sir William, who sometimes came down to the country, was loved. He went on to observe, that he made it his whole study to betray the daughters of such as received him to their houses, and after a fortnight or three weeks possession, turned them out unrewarded and abandoned to the world. As we continued our discourse in this manner, his wife, who had been out to get change, returned, and perceiving that her husband was enjoying a pleasure in which she was not a sharer, she asked him, in an angry tone, what he did there? To which he only replied in an ironical way, by drinking her health. "Mr Symondons," cried she, "you use me very ill, and I'll bear it no longer. Here three parts of the business is left for me to do, and the fourth left unfinished, while you do nothing but soak with the guests all day long; whereas, if a spoonful of liquor were to cure me of a fever, I never touch a drop." I now found what she would be at, and immediately poured her out a glass, which she received with a curtsey, and drinking towards my good health, "Sir," resumed she, "it is not so much for the value of the liquor I am angry, but one cannot help it, when the house is going out of the windows. If the customers or guests are to

" be dunned, all the burden lies upon my back ; he'd
" as lief eat that glass as budge" after them himself.
" There now, above stairs, we have a young woman
" who has come to take up her lodging here, and I
" don't believe she has got any money by her over
" civility. I am certain she is very slow of payment,
" and I wish she were put in mind of it." — " What
" signifies minding her ?" cried the host ; " if she be
" slow, she is sure." — " I don't know that," replied
the wife ; " but I know that I am sure she has been
" here a fortnight, and we have not yet seen the cross
" of her money." — " I suppose, my dear," cried
he, " we shall have it all in a lump." — " In a lump !"
cried the other, " I hope we may get it any way ; and
" that I am resolved we will this very night, or out
" she tramps, bag and baggage." — " Consider, my
" dear," cried the husband, " she is a gentlewoman,
" and deserves more respect." — " As for the matter
" of that," returned the hostess, " gentle or semple,
" out she shall pack with a saffarara. Gentry may
" be good things where they take ; but, for my part,
" I never saw much good of them at the sign of the
" Harrow."

Thus saying, she ran up a narrow flight of stairs, that went from the kitchen to a room over-head ; and I soon perceived, by the loudness of her voice, and the bitterness of her reproaches, that no money was to be had from her lodger. I could hear her remonstrances very distinctly : " Out, I say ; pack out this moment ; " tramp, thou infamous strumpet, or I'll give thee a

“ mark thou won’t be the better for this three
“ months. What ! you trumpery, to come and take
“ up an honest house, without crofs or coin to bleſſ
“ yourself with ! Come along, I say.”——“ O dear
“ Madam,” cried the stranger, “ pity me ; pity a
“ poor abandoned creature for one night, and death
“ will ſoon do the reſt.”——I iſtantly knew the voice
of my poor ruined child, Olivia. I flew to her reſcue,
while the woman was dragging her along by the hair,
and I caught the dear forlorn wretch in my arms.
——“ Welcome, any way welcome, my deareſt loſt
“ one, my treasure, to your poor old father’s boſom.
“ Though the vicious forſake thee, there is yet one in
“ the world that will never forſake thee ; though thou
“ hadſt ten thouſand crimes to anſwer for, he will for-
“ get them all.”——“ O my own dear”——for minutes
ſhe could no more——“ my own deareſt good Pappa”
“ Could angels be kinder ! How do I deſerve ſo much !
“ The villain ! I hate him and myſelf, to be a re-
“ proach to ſuch goodness. You can’t forgiue me ;
“ I know you cannot.”——“ Yes, my child, from
“ my heart I do forgiue thee ! Only repent, and we
“ both ſhall yet be happy. We ſhall ſee many plea-
“ ſant days yet, my Olivia.”——“ Ah ! never, Sir,
“ never. The reſt of my wretched life muſt be in
“ famy abroad, and shame at home. But, alas ! Pappa,
“ you look much paler than you uſed to do. Could
“ ſuch a thing as I am give you ſo much uneaſineſs ?
“ Sure you have too much wiſdom to take the miſ-
“ ries of my guilt upon yourſelf ?”——“ Our wiſdom,
“ young

"young woman," replied I — "Ah! why so cold
"a name, Pappa?" cried she. "This is the first time
"you ever called me by so cold a name." — "I ask
"pardon, my darling," returned I; "but I was going
"to observe, that wisdom makes but a slow defence
"against trouble, though at last a sure one."

The landlady now returned, to know if we did not choose a more genteel apartment; to which assenting, we were shewn a room, where we could converse more freely. After we had talked ourselyes into some degree of tranquillity, I could not avoid desiring some account of the gradations that led to her present wretched situation. "That villain, Sir," said she, "from the first day of our meeting made me honourable, though private proposals."

"Villain indeed!" cried I; "and yet it in some measure surprises me, how a person of Mr Burchell's good sense, and seeming honour, could be guilty of such deliberate baseness, and thus step into a family to undo it."

"My dear Pappa," returned my daughter, "you labour under a strange mistake; Mr Burchell never attempted to deceive me. Instead of that, he took every opportunity of privately admonishing me against the artifices of Mr Thornhill, who, I now find, was even worse than he represented him." — "Mr Thornhill!" interrupted I; "can it be?" — "Yes, Sir," returned she; "it was Mr Thornhill who seduced me, who employed the two ladies, as he called them, but who, in fact, were abandoned wo-

“ men of the town, without breeding or pity, to do
“ coy us up to London. Their artifices, you may
“ remember, would have certainly succeeded, but for
“ Mr Burchell’s letter, who directed those reproaches
“ at them, which we all applied to ourselves. How
“ he came to have so much influence as to defeat
“ their intentions, still remains a secret to me; but I
“ am convinced he was ever our warmest, sincerest
“ friend.”

“ You amaze me, my dear,” cried I; “ but now
“ I find my first suspicions of Mr Thornhill’s baseness
“ were too well-grounded: but he can triumph in se-
“ curity; for he is rich, and we are poor. But tell
“ me, my child, sure it was no small temptation that
“ could thus obliterate all the impressions of such an
“ education, and so virtuous a disposition as thine.”

“ Indeed, Sir,” replied she, “ he owes all his tri-
“ umph to the desire I had of making him, and not
“ myself, happy. I knew that the ceremony of our
“ marriage, which was privately performed by a Po-
“ pish priest, was no way binding, and that I had no-
“ thing to trust to but his honour.” “ What,” inter-
“ rupted I, “ and were you indeed married by a priest,
“ and in orders?” “ Indeed, Sir, we were,” replied
she, “ though we were both sworn to conceal his
“ name.” — “ Why, then, my child, come to my
“ arms again; and now you are a thousand times
“ more welcome than before; for you are now his
“ wife, to all intents and purposes; nor can all the
“ laws of man, though written upon tables of ada-

“ mant,

" mant; lessen the force of that sacred connection."

" Alas, Pappa," replied she, " you are but little acquainted with his villanies : he has been married already, by the same priest, to six or eight wives more, whom, like me, he has deceived and abandoned."

" Has he so?" cried I ; " then we must hang the priest, and you shall inform against him to-morrow."—" But, Sir," returned she, " will that be right, when I am sworn to secrecy?"—" My dear," I replied, " if you have made such a promise, I cannot, nor will I tempt you to break it. Even though it may benefit the public, you must not inform against him. In all human institutions, a smaller evil is allowed, to procure a greater good; as in politics, a province may be given away, to secure a kingdom; in medicine, a limb may be lopt off, to preserve the body. But in religion, the law is written, and inflexible, *never* to do evil. And this law, my child, is right: for, otherwise, if we commit a smaller evil, to procure a greater good, certain guilt would be thus incurred, in expectation of contingent advantage. And though the advantage should certainly follow, yet the interval between commission and advantage, which is allowed to be guilty, may be that in which we are called away to answer for the things we have done, and the volume of human actions is closed for ever. But I interrupt you my dear; go on."

" The

“ The very next morning,” continued she, “ I found what little expectations I was to have from his sincerity. That very morning, he introduced me to two unhappy women more, whom, like me, he had deceived, but who lived in contented prostitution. I loved him too tenderly, to bear such rivals in his affections; and strove to forget my infamy in a tumult of pleasures. With this view, I danced, dressed, and talked; but still was unhappy. The gentlemen who visited there, told me, every moment, of the power of my charms; and this only contributed to increase my melancholy, as I had thrown all their power quite away. Thus, each day I grew more pensive, and he more insolent, till at last the monster had the assurance to offer me to a young Baronet of his acquaintance. Need I describe, Sir, how his ingratitude stung me? My answer to this proposal was almost madness. I desired to part. As I was going, he offered me a purse; but I flung it at him with indignation, and burst from him in a rage, that for a while kept me insensible of the miseries of my situation. But I soon looked round me, and saw myself a vile, abject, guilty thing, without one friend in the world to apply to.

“ Just in that interval a stage-coach happening to pass by, I took a place, it being my only aim to be driven at a distance from a wretch I despised and detested. I was set down here, where, since my arrival, my own anxiety, and this woman’s unkind-

“ ness,

"ness, have been my only companions. The hours of pleasure that I have passed with my Mamma and sister, now grow painful to me. Their sorrows are much, but mine is greater than theirs; for mine is mixed with guilt and infamy."

"Have patience, my child," cried I, "and I hope things will yet be better. Take some repose to-night, and to-morrow I'll carry you home to your mother, and the rest of the family, from whom you will receive a kind reception. Poor woman! this has gone to her heart: but she loves you still, Oliver, and will forget it."

C H A P. XXII.

Offences are easily pardoned, where there is love at bottom.

THE next morning I took my daughter behind me, and set out on my return home. As we travelled along, I strove, by every persuasion, to calm her sorrows and fears, and to arm her with resolution to bear the presence of her offended mother. I took every opportunity, from the prospect of a fine country through which we passed, to observe how much kinder

Heaven

Heaven was to us than we to each other ; and, that the misfortunes of Nature's making were very few. I assured her, that she should never perceive any change in my affections ; and that, during my life, which yet might be long, she might depend upon a guardian and an instructor. I armed her against the censures of the world ; showed her, that books were sweet unreproaching companions to the miserable ; and that, if they could not bring us to enjoy life, they would at least teach us to endure it.

The hired horse that we rode was to be put up that night at an inn by the way, within about five miles from my house ; and, as I was willing to prepare my family for my daughter's reception, I determined to leave her that night at the inn, and to return for her, accompanied by my daughter Sophia, early the next morning. It was night before we reached our appointed stage : however, after seeing her provided with a decent apartment, and having ordered the hostess to prepare proper refreshments, I kissed her, and proceeded towards home. And now my heart caught new sensations of pleasure, the nearer I approached that peaceful mansion. As a bird that had been frightened from its nest, my affections outwent my haste, and hovered round my little fire-side with all the rapture of expectation. I called up the many fond things I had to say, and anticipated the welcome I was to receive. I already felt my wife's tender embrace, and smiled at the joy of my little ones. As I walked but slowly, the night waned apace. The labours

bourers of the day were all retired to rest ; the lights were out in every cottage ; no sounds were heard, but of the shrilling cock, and the deep-mouthed watchdog, at hollow distance. I approached my little abode with pleasure, and, before I was within a furlong of the place, our honest mastiff came running to welcome me.

It was now near mid-night that I came to knock at my door : all was still and silent : my heart dilated with unutterable happiness, when, to my amazement, I saw the house bursting out in a blaze of fire, and every aperture red with conflagration ! I gave a loud convulsive outcry, and fell upon the pavement insensible. This alarmed my son, who had till this been asleep ; and he, perceiving the flames, instantly waked my wife and daughter, and all running out naked, and wild with apprehension, recalled me to life with their anguish : but it was only to objects of new terror ; for the flames had, by this time, caught the roof of our dwelling, part after part continuing to fall in, while the family stood, with silent agony, looking on as if they enjoyed the blaze. I gazed upon them and upon it by turns, and then looked round me for my two little ones ; but they were not to be seen. " O misery ! where," cried I, " where are my little ones ? " " They are burnt to death in the flames," says my wife calmly, " and I will die with them." That moment I heard the cry of the babes within, who were just awaked by the fire, and nothing could have stopped me. " Where

" are

" are my children?" cried I, rushing through the flames, and bursting the door of the chamber in which they were confined, " where are my little ones?"— " Here, dear pappa, here we are," cried they together, while the flames were just catching the bed where they lay. I caught them both in my arms, and snatched them through the fire as fast as possible, while, just as I was got out, the roof sunk in. " Now," cried I, holding up my children, " now let the flames " burn on, and all my possessions perish. Here they " are ; I have saved my treasures. Here my dearest, " here are our treasures, and we shall yet be happy." We kissed our little darlings a thousand times ; they clasped us round the neck, and seemed to share our transports, while their mother laughed and wept by turns.

I now stood a calm spectator of the flames ; and, after some time, began to perceive that my arm, to the shoulder, was scorched in a terrible manner. It was, therefore, out of my power to give my son any assistance, either in attempting to save our goods, or preventing the flames spreading to our corn. By this time the neighbours were alarmed, and came running to our assistance ; but all they could do was to stand, like us, spectators of the calamity. My goods, among which were the notes I had reserved for my daughters fortunes, were entirely consumed, except a box, with some papers, that stood in the kitchen, and two or three things more of little consequence, which my son brought away in the beginning. The neighbours

contributed, however, what they could to lighten our distress. They brought us clothes, and furnished one of our out-houses with kitchen utensils; so that, by day-light, we had another, though a wretched dwelling, to retire to. My honest next neighbour, and his children, were not the least assiduous in providing us with every thing necessary, and offering whatever consolation untutored benevolence could suggest.

When the fears of my family had subsided, curiosity to know the cause of my long stay began to take place: having, therefore, informed them of every particular, I proceeded to prepare them for the reception of our lost one; and though we had nothing but wretchedness now to impart, I was willing to procure her a welcome to what we had. This task would have been more difficult but for our recent calamity, which had humbled my wife's pride, and blunted it by more poignant afflictions. Being unable to go for my poor child myself, as my arm grew very painful, I sent my son and daughter, who soon returned, supporting the wretched delinquent, who had not the courage to look up at her mother, whom no instructions of mine could persuade to a perfect reconciliation; for women have a much stronger sense of female error than men. "Ah, Madam!" cried her mother, "this is but a poor place you are come to, after so much finery. My daughter Sophy and I can afford but little entertainment to persons who have kept company only with people of distinction. Yes, Miss Livy, your poor father and I have suffered very

“ much of late; but I hope Heaven will forgive
“ you.” During this reception, the unhappy victim
stood pale and trembling, unable to weep, or to re-
ply; but I could not continue a silent spectator of her
distress; wherefore, assuming a degree of severity in
my voice and manner, which was ever followed with
instant submission, “ I intreat, woman, that my
“ words may be now marked once for all: I have
“ here brought you back a poor deluded wanderer;
“ her return to duty demands the revival of our ten-
“ derness. The real hardships of life are now coming
“ fast upon us; let us not, therefore, increase them
“ by dissention among each other. If we live harmo-
“ niously together, we may yet be contented, as there
“ are enough of us to shut out the censuring world,
“ and keep each other in countenance. The kind-
“ ness of Heaven is promised to the penitent; and
“ let ours be directed by the example. Heaven,
“ we are assured, is much more pleased to view a
“ repentant sinner, than ninety-nine persons who have
“ supported a course of undeviating rectitude. And
“ this is right; for that single effort, by which we
“ stop short in the down-hill path to perdition, is itself
“ a greater exertion of virtue than an hundred acts
“ of justice.”

C H A P. XXIII.

None but the guilty can be long and completely miserable.

SOME assiduity was now required to make our present abode as convenient as possible ; and we were soon again qualified to enjoy our former serenity. Being disabled myself from assisting my son in our usual occupations, I read to my family from the few books that were saved, and particularly from such as, by amusing the imagination, contributed to ease the heart. Our good neighbours, too, came every day with the kindest condolence, and fixed a time in which they were all to assist at repairing my former dwelling. Honest farmer Williams was not last among these visitors ; but heartily offered his friendship. He would even have renewed his addresses to my daughter ; but she rejected them in such a manner as totally repressed his future solicitations. Her grief seemed formed for continuing ; and she was the only person of our little society that a week did not restore to cheerfulness. She now lost that unblushing innocence which once taught her to respect herself, and to seek pleasure by pleasing. Anxiety now had taken strong possession of her mind ; her beauty began to be impaired with her

THE VICAR OF

constitution, and neglect still more contributed to diminish it. Every tender epithet bestowed on her sister brought a pang to her heart, and a tear to her eye; and as one vice, though cured, ever plants others where it has been, so her former guilt, though driven out by repentance, left jealousy and envy behind. I strove a thousand ways to lessen her care, and even forgot my own pain in a concern for hers, collecting such amusing passages of history, as a strong memory and some reading could suggest. "Our happiness, " my dear," I would say, " is in the power of one who can bring it about a thousand unforeseen ways that mock our foresight. If example be necessary to prove this, I'll give you a story, my child, told us by a grave, though sometimes a romancing historian.

" Matilda was married very young to a Neapolitan nobleman of the first quality, and found herself a widow and a mother at the age of fifteen. As she stood one day caressing her infant son in the open window of an apartment, which hung over the river Volturna, the child, with a sudden spring leaped from her arms into the flood below, and disappeared in a moment. The mother, struck with instant surprize, and making an effort to save him, plunged in after; but, far from being able to assist the infant, she herself, with great difficulty, escaped to the opposite shore, just when some French soldiers were plundering the country on that side, who immediately made her their prisoner.

" As

" As the war was then carried on between the
" French and Italians with the utmost inhumanity,
" they were going at once to perpetrate those two ex-
" tremes, suggested by appetite and cruelty. This
" base resolution, however, was opposed by a young
" officer, who, though their retreat required the ut-
" most expedition, placed her behind him, and brought
" her in safety to his native city. Her beauty at first
" caught his eye, her merit soon after his heart. They
" were married; he rose to the highest posts; they
" lived long together, and were happy. But the fa-
" licity of a soldier can never be called permanent:
" after an interval of several years, the troops which
" he commanded having met with a repulse, he was
" obliged to take shelter in the city where he had
" lived with his wife. Here they suffered a siege, and
" the city at length was taken. Few histories can
" produce more various instances of cruelty than those
" which the French and Italians at that time exercised
" upon each other. It was resolved by the victors,
" upon this occasion, to put all the French prisoners
" to death, but particularly the husband of the unfor-
" tunate Matilda, as he was principally instrumental
" in protracting the siege. Their determinations were,
" in general, executed almost as soon as resolved up-
" on. The captive soldier was led forth, and the ex-
" cutioner, with his sword, stood ready, while the
" spectators, in gloomy silence, awaited the fatal blow,
" which was only suspended till the general, who pre-
" sided as judge, should give the signal. It was in

" this interval of anguish and expectation that Matilda came to take her last farewell of her husband and deliverer, deplored her wretched situation, and the cruelty of fate, that had saved her from perishing by a premature death in the river Volturna, to be the spectator of still greater calamities. The general, who was a young man, was struck with surprize at her beauty, and pity at her distress; but with still stronger emotions, when he heard her mention her former dangers. He was her son, the infant for whom she had encountered so much danger. He acknowledged her at once as his mother, and fell at her feet. The rest may be easily supposed; the captive was set free, and all the happiness that love, friendship, and duty, could confer on each, were united."

In this manner I would attempt to amuse my daughter; but she listened with divided attention; for her own misfortunes engrossed all the pity she once had for those of another, and nothing gave her ease. In company, she dreaded contempt; and in solitude she only found anxiety. Such was the colour of her wretchedness, when we received certain information, that Mr Thornhill was going to be married to Miss Wilmot, for whom I always suspected he had a real passion, though he took every opportunity, before me, to express his contempt both of her person and fortune. This news only served to increase poor Olivia's affliction; such a flagrant breach of fidelity was more than her courage could support. I was resolved, however,

however, to get more certain information, and to defeat, if possible, the completion of his designs, by sending my son to old Mr Wilmot's, with instructions to know the truth of the report, and to deliver Miss Wilmot a letter, intimating Mr Thornhill's conduct in my family. My son went, in pursuance of my directions, and in three days returned, assuring us of the truth of the accounts; but that he had found it impossible to deliver the letter, which he was therefore obliged to leave, as Mr Thornhill and Miss Wilmot were visiting round the country. They were to be married, he said, in a few days; having appeared together at church, the Sunday before he was there, in great splendour; the bride attended by six young ladies, and he by as many gentlemen. Their approaching nuptials filled the whole country with rejoicing, and they usually rode out together in the grandest equipage that had been seen in the country for many years. All the friends of both families, he said, were there; particularly the Squire's uncle, Sir William Thornhill, who bore so good a character. He added, that nothing but mirth and feasting were going forward; that all the country praised the young bride's beauty, and the bridegroom's fine person, and that they were immensely fond of each other; concluding, that he could not help thinking Mr Thornhill one of the most happy men in the world.

"Why, let him, if he can," returned I; "but, my son, observe this bed of straw, and unsheltering roof; those mouldering walls, and humid floor;

"my

“ my wretched body, thus disabled by fire, and my
“ children weeping round me for bread: you have
“ come home, my child, to all this: yet here, even
“ here, you see a man that would not for a thousand
“ worlds exchange situations. O my children, if you
“ could but learn to commune with your own hearts,
“ and know what noble company you can make them,
“ you would little regard the elegance and splendor
“ of the worthless. Almost all men have been taught
“ to call life a passage, and themselves the travellers.
“ The similitude still may be improved, when we ob-
“ serve, that the good are joyful and serene, like tra-
“ vellers that are going towards home; the wicked
“ but by intervals happy, like travellers that are go-
“ ing into exile.”

My compassion for my poor daughter, overpowered by this new disaster, interrupted what I had farther to observe. I bade her mother support her, and, after a short time, she recovered. She appeared from that time more calm, and, I imagined, had gained a new degree of resolution: but appearances deceived me, for her tranquillity was the languor of over-wrought resentment. A supply of provisions, charitably sent us by my kind parishioners, seemed to diffuse new cheerfulness among the rest of the family; nor was I displeased at seeing them, once more, sprightly and at ease. It would have been unjust to damp their satisfactions, merely to condole with resolute melancholy, or to burden them with a sadness they did not feel. Thus, once more, the tale went round, and the song
was

was demanded, and cheerfulness condescended to hover round our little habitation.

C H A P. XXIV.

Fresh calamities.

THE next morning, the sun arose with peculiar warmth for the season; so that we agreed to breakfast together on the honey-fuckle bank: where, while we sat, my youngest daughter, at my request, joined her voice to the concert on the trees about us. It was in this place my poor Olivia first met her seducer, and every object served to recal her sadness. But that melancholy, which is excited by objects of pleasure, or inspired by sounds of harmony, soothes the heart instead of corroding it. Her mother too, upon this occasion, felt a pleasing distress, and wept and loved her daughter as before. "Do, my pretty Olivia," cried she, "let us have that little melancholy air your pappa was so fond of; your sister Sophy has already obliged us. Do, child, it will please your old father." She complied in a manner so exquisitely pathetic, as moved me:

"When

THE VICAR OF

“ When lovely woman stoops to folly,
“ And finds too late that men betray,
“ What charm can soothe her melancholy,
“ What art can wash her guilt away ?

“ The only art her guilt to cover,
“ To hide her shame from ev’ry eye,
“ To give repentance to her lover,
“ And wring his bosom—is to die.”

As she was concluding the last stanza, to which an interruption in her voice, from sorrow, gave peculiar softness, the appearance of Mr Thornhill’s equipage at a distance alarmed us all, but particularly increased the uneasiness of my eldest daughter, who, desirous of shunning her betrayer, returned to the house with her sister. In a few minutes he was alighted from his chariot, and, making up to the place where I was still sitting, enquired after my health, with his usual air of familiarity. “ Sir,” replied I, “ your present affu-
“ rance only serves to aggravate the baseness of your
“ character ; and there was a time when I would have
“ chastised your insolence, for presuming thus to ap-
“ pear before me. But now you are safe ; for age
“ has cooled my passions, and my calling restrains
“ them.”

“ I vow, my dear Sir,” returned he, “ I am ama-
“ zed at all this ; nor can I understand what it means !
“ I hope you don’t think your daughter’s late excur-
“ sion with me had any thing criminal in it ? ”

“ Go,”

" Go," cried I, " thou art a wretch, a poor pitiful wretch, and every way a liar; but your meanness secures you from my anger! —— Yet, Sir, I am descended from a family that would not have borne this! And so, thou vile thing, to gratify a momentary passion, thou hast made one poor creature wretched for life, and polluted a family that had nothing but honour for their portion."

" If she, or you," returned he, " are resolved to be miserable, I cannot help it. But you may still be happy; and whatever opinion you may have formed of me, you shall ever find me ready to contribute to it. We can marry her to another in a short time, and, what is more, she may keep her lover beside; for I protest I shall ever continue to have a true regard for her."

I found all my passions alarmed at this new degrading proposal; for though the mind may often be calm under great injuries, little villainy can at any time get within the soul, and sting it into rage. — " Avoid my sight, thou reptile," cried I, " nor continue to insult me with thy presence. Were my brave son at home, he would not suffer this; but I am old, and disabled, and every way undone."

" I find," cried he, " you are bent upon obliging me to talk in an harsher manner than I intended. But as I have shown you what may be hoped from my friendship, it may not be improper to represent what may be the consequences of my resentment. My attorney, to whom your late bond has been transferred,

" transferred, threatens hard; nor do I know how to
" prevent the course of justice, except by paying the
" money myself, which, as I have been at some ex-
offences lately, previous to my intended marriage,
" is not so easy to be done: and then my steward
" talks of driving for the rent: it is certain he knows
" his duty; for I never trouble myself with affairs of
" that nature. Yet still I could wish to serve you,
" and even to have you and your daughter present at
" my marriage, which is shortly to be solemnized with
" Miss Wilmot; it is even the request of my charming
" Arabella herself, whom I hope you will not refuse."

" Mr. Thornhill," replied I, " hear me once for
" all: As to your marriage with any but my daugh-
" ter, that I never will consent to; and though your
" friendship could raise me to a throne, or your re-
" sentment sink me to the grave, yet would I despise
" both. Thou hast once wofully, irreparably decei-
" ved me: I reposed my heart upon thine honour,
" and have found its baseness. Never more, there-
" fore, expect friendship from me. Go, and possess
" what fortune has given thee, beauty, riches, health,
" and pleasure. Go, and leave me to want, infamy,
" disease, and sorrow. Yet, humbled as I am, shall
" my heart still vindicate its dignity; and though thou
" hast my forgiveness, thou shalt ever have my con-
" tempt."

" If so," returned he, " depend upon it you shall
" feel the effects of this insolence; and we shall short-
" ly meet again, and I will make you pay for your
" impudence."

"ly see which is the fittest object of scorn, you or me."

—Upon which he departed abruptly.

My wife and son, who were present at this interview, seemed terrified with the apprehension. My daughters also, finding that he was gone, came out to be informed of the result of our conference, which, when known, alarmed them not less than the rest. But, as to myself, I disregarded the utmost stretch of his malevolence: he had already struck the blow, and now I stood prepared to repel every new effort. Like one of those instruments used in the art of war, which, however thrown, still presents a point to receive the enemy.

We soon, however, found, that he had not threatened in vain; for the very next morning his steward came to demand my annual rent, which, by the train of accidents already related, I was unable to pay. The consequence of my incapacity, was his driving my cattle that evening, and their being appraised and sold the next day for less than half their value. My wife and children now therefore intreated me to comply upon any terms, rather than incur certain destruction. They even begged of me to admit his visits once more, and used all their little eloquence to paint the calamities I was going to endure; the terrors of a prison, in so rigorous a season as the present, with the danger that threatened my health from the late accident that happened by the fire. But I continued inflexible.

"Why, my treasures," cried I, "why will you thus
attempt to persuade me to the thing that is not
right! My duty has taught me to forgive him; but
my conscience will not permit me to approve.
Would you have me applaud to the world what my
heart must internally condemn? Would you have
me tamely sit down and flatter our infamous be-
trayer; and, to avoid a prison, continually suffer the
more galling bonds of mental confinement? No,
never. If we are to be taken from this abode, only
let us hold to the right; and, wherever we are
thrown, we can still retire to a charming apart-
ment, when we can look round our own hearts
with intrepidity and with pleasure!"

In this manner we spent that evening. Early the next morning, as the snow had fallen in great abundance in the night, my son was employed in clearing it away, and opening a passage before the door. He had not been thus engaged long, when he came running in, with looks all pale, to tell us that two strangers, whom he knew to be officers of justice, were making towards the house.

Just as he spoke they came in, and, approaching the bed where I lay, after previously informing me of their employment and business, made me their prisoner, bidding me prepare to go with them to the county goal, which was eleven miles off.

"My friends," said I, "this is severe weather in
which you have come to take me to a prison; and
it is particularly unfortunate at this time, as one of

"my

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" my arms has lately been burnt in a terrible manner,
" and it has thrown me into a slight fever, and I want
" clothes to cover me, and I am now too weak and
" old to walk far in such deep snow: but, if it must
" be so," —

I then turned to my wife and children, and directed them to get together what few things were left us, and to prepare immediately for leaving this place. I intreated them to be expeditious, and desired my son to assist his elder sister, who, from a consciousness that she was the cause of all our calamities, was fallen, and had lost anguish in insensibility. I encouraged my wife, who, pale and trembling, clasped our affrighted little ones in her arms, that clung to her bosom in silence, dreading to look round at the strangers. In the mean time, my youngest daughter prepared for our departure; and as she received several hints to use dispatch, in about an hour we were ready to depart.

Q 2

CHAP.

PARSONAGE.

THE VICAR OF PARSONAGE.

C. H. A. P. XXV.

No situation, however wretched it seems, but has some sort of comfort attending it.

WE set forward from this peaceful neighbourhood, and walked on slowly. My eldest daughter being enfeebled by a slow fever, which had begun for some days to undermine her constitution, one of the officers, who had an horse, kindly took her behind him; for even these men cannot entirely divest themselves of humanity. My son led one of the little ones by the hand, and my wife the other; while I leaned upon my youngest girl, whose tears fell, not for her own, but my distresses.

We were now got from my late dwelling about two miles, when we saw a crowd running and shouting behind us, consisting of about fifty of my poorest parishioners. These, with dreadful imprecations, soon seized upon the two officers of justice, and swearing they would never see their minister go to goal, while they had a drop of blood to shed in his defence, were going to use them with great severity. The consequence might have been fatal, had I not immediately interposed, and, with some difficulty, rescued the officers from the hands of the enraged multitude. My children, who looked upon my delivery now as certain, appeared

appeared transported with joy, and were incapable of containing their raptures. But they were soon undeceived, upon hearing me address the poor deluded people, who came, as they imagined, to do me service.

"What! my friends," cried I, "and is this the way you love me? Is this the manner you obey the instructions I have given you from the pulpit, thus to fly in the face of justice, and bring down ruin on yourselves and me? Which is your ring-leader? Show me the man that has thus seduced you: as sure as he lives, he shall feel my resentment. Alas! my dear deluded flock, return back to the duty you owe to God, to your country, and to me. I shall yet perhaps one day see you in greater felicity here, and contribute to make your lives more happy. But let it at least be my comfort when I pen my fold-for-immortality, that not one here shall be wanting."

They now seemed all repentance; and, melting into tears, came one after the other to bid me farewell. I shook each tenderly by the hand, and, leaving them my blessing, proceeded forward, without meeting any farther interruption. Some hours before night we reached the town, or rather village; for it consisted but of a few mean houses, having lost all its former opulence, and retaining no marks of its ancient superiority but the goal.

Upon entering, we put up at an inn, where we had such refreshments as could most readily be pro-

cured, and I supped with my family with my usual cheerfulness. After seeing them properly accommodated for that night, I next attended the sheriff's officers to the prison, which had formerly been built for the purposes of war, and consisted of one large apartment, strongly grated, and paved with stone, common to both felons and debtors at certain hours in the four and twenty. Besides this, every prisoner had a separate cell, where he was locked in for the night.

I expected, upon my entrance, to find nothing but lamentations, and various sounds of misery; but it was very different. The prisoners seemed all employed in one common design, that of forgetting thought in merriment or clamour. I was apprized of the usual perquisite required upon these occasions, and immediately complied with the demand, though the little money I had was very near being all exhausted. This was immediately sent away for liquor; and the whole prison was soon filled with riot, laughter, and profaneness.

“ How !” cried I to myself, “ shall men so very wicked be cheerful, and shall I be melancholy ? I feel only the same confinement with them, and I think I have more reason to be happy.”

With such reflections I laboured to become cheerful; but cheerfulness was never yet produced by effort which is itself painful. As I was sitting therefore in a corner of the goal, in a pensive posture, one of my fellow-prisoners came up, and, sitting by

me,

me, entered into conversation. It was my constant rule in life never to avoid the conversation of any man who seemed to desire it ; for, if good, I might profit by his instruction ; if bad, he might be assisted by mine. I found this to be a knowing man, of strong unlettered sense, but a thorough knowledge of the world, as it is called, or, more properly speaking, of human nature on the wrong side. He asked me if I had taken care to provide myself with a bed, which was a circumstance I had never once attended to.

“ That’s unfortunate,” cried he, “ as you are allowed here nothing but straw, and your apartment is very large and cold. However, you seem to be something of a gentleman, and as I have been one myself in my time, part of my bed-clothes are hear-
“ tily at your service.”

I thanked him, professing my surprise at finding such humanity in a goal, in misfortunes ; adding, to let him see that I was a scholar, that “ the sage an-
“ cient seemed to understand the value of company
“ in affliction, when he said, *Ton kosman aire, ei das*
“ *ton etairon* ; and in fact,” continued I, “ what is the
“ world if it affords only solitude ?”

“ You talk of the world, Sir,” returned my fellow-prisoner ; “ the world is in its dotage, and yet the co-
“ mogony, or creation of the world, has puzzled the
“ philosophers of every age. What a medley of opi-
“ nions have they not broached upon the creation of
“ the world ! Sanconiathon, Manetho, Berothus, and
“ Ocellus Lucanus, have all attempted it in vain. The
“ latter

" latter has these words: *Anarchon atra kai atelutatio*
" *to pain*, which implies" ——"I ask pardon, Sir,"
cried I, "for interrupting so much learning; but
" I think I have heard all this before. Have I not had
" the pleasure of once seeing you at Welbridge fair?
" and is not your name Ephraim Jenkinson?" At this
demand he only sighed. "I suppose you must recol-
" lect," resumed I, "one Doctor Primrose, from whom
" you bought a horse."

He now at once recollected me; for the gloominess of the place, and the approaching night, had prevented his distinguishing my features before.—
" Yes, Sir," returned Mr Jenkinson, " I remember
" you perfectly well: I bought an horse, but forgot
" to pay for him. Your neighbour Flamborough is
" the only prosecutor I am any way afraid of at the
" next assizes: for he intends to swear positively against
" me as a coiner. I am heartily sorry, Sir, I ever
" deceived you, or indeed any man; for you see,"
continued he, showing his shackles, " what my tricks
" have brought me to."

" Well, Sir," replied I, " your kindness in offer-
" ing me assistance when you could expect no return,
" shall be repaid with my endeavours to soften or to-
" tally suppress Mr Flamborough's evidence; and I
" will send my son to him for that purpose the first
" opportunity; nor do I in the least doubt but he will
" comply with my request; and as to my own evi-
" dence, you need be under no uneasiness about
" that."

" Well,

" Well, Sir," cried he, " all the return I can make
" shall be yours. You shall have more than half my
" bed-clothes to-night; and I'll take care to stand
" your friend in the prison, where, I think, I have
" some influence."

I thanked him, and could not avoid being surprised at the present youthful change in his aspect; for, at the time I had seen him before, he appeared at least sixty.—“ Sir,” answered he, “ you are little acquainted with the world; I had at that time false hair, and have learned the art of counterfeiting every age, from seventeen to seventy. Ah, Sir, had I but bestowed half the pains in learning a trade that I have in learning to be a scoundrel, I might have been a rich man at this day. But, rogue as I am, still I may be your friend, and that perhaps when you least expect it.”

We were now prevented from farther conversation by the arrival of the goaler’s servants, who came to call over the prisoners names, and lock up for the night. A fellow also, with a bundle of straw for my bed, attended, who led me along a dark narrow passage, into a room paved like the common prison; and in one corner of this I spread my bed, and the clothes given me by my fellow-prisoner; which done, my conductor, who was civil enough, bade me a good-night. After my usual meditations, and having praised my Heavenly Corrector, I laid myself down, and slept with the utmost tranquillity till morning.

YORK
AND I MENTIONED IN THE PREVIOUS
CHAPTER THAT I HAD BEEN
BROUGHT UP IN THE IDEA THAT I HAD
EVERY RIGHT IN **CHAP. XXVI.**

*A reformation in the goal. To make laws complete,
they should reward as well as punish.*

THE next morning early, I was awakened by my family, whom I found in tears at my bedside. The gloomy strength of every thing about us, it seems, had daunted them. I gently rebuked their sorrow, assuring them, I had never slept with greater tranquillity; and next inquired after my eldest daughter, who was not among them. They informed me, that yesterday's uneasiness and fatigue had increased her fever, and it was judged proper to leave her behind. My next care was to send my son to procure a room or two to lodge the family in, as near the prison as conveniently could be found. He obeyed; but could only find one apartment, which was hired, at a small expence, for his mother and sisters, the goaler with humanity consenting to let him and his two little brothers lye in the prison with me. A bed was therefore prepared for them in the corner of the room, which I thought answered very conveniently. I was willing, however, previously to know whether my little children chose to lye in a place which seemed to fright them upon entrance.

"Well,"

" Well," cried I, " my good boys, how do you like your bed? I hope you are not afraid to lye in this room, dark as it appears?"

" No, Pappa," says Dick, " I am not afraid to lye any where, where you are."

" And I," says Bill, who was yet but four years old, " love every place best that my Pappa is in."

After this, I allotted to each of the family what they were to do. My daughter was particularly directed to watch her declining sister's health; my wife was to attend me; my little boys were to read to me: " And as for you, my son," continued I, " it is by the labour of your hands we must all hope to be supported. Your wages, as a day-labourer, will be fully sufficient, with proper frugality, to maintain us all, and comfortably too. Thou art now sixteen years old, and hast strength; and it was given thee, my son, for very useful purposes; for it must save from famine your helpless parents and family. Prepare, then, this evening to look out for work against to-morrow; bring home every night what money you earn, for our support."

Having thus instructed him, and settled the rest, I walked down to the common prison, where I could enjoy more air and room. But I was not long there when the execrations, lewdness, and brutality that invaded me on every side, drove me back to my apartment again. Here I sat for some time pondering upon the strange infatuation of wretches, who, finding all man-

kind

kind in open arms against them, were labouring to make themselves a future and a tremendous enemy.

Their insensibility excited my highest compassion, and blotted my own uneasiness from my mind. It even appeared a duty incumbent upon me to attempt to reclaim them. I resolved, therefore, once more to return, and, in spite of their contempt, to give them my advice, and conquer them by perseverance. Going, therefore, among them again, I informed Mr Jenkinson of my design ; at which he laughed heartily, but communicated it to the rest. The proposal was received with the greatest good humour, as it promised to afford a new fund of entertainment to persons who had now no other resource for mirth, but what could be derived from ridicule or debauchery.

I therefore read them a portion of the service with a loud unaffected voice, and found my audience perfectly merry upon the occasion. Lewd whispers, groans of contrition burlesqu'd, winking and coughing, alternately excited laughter. However, I continued with my natural solemnity to read on, sensible, that what I did might amend some, but could itself receive no contamination from any.

After reading, I entered upon my exhortation, which was rather calculated at first to amuse them, than to reprove. I previously observed, that no other motive but their welfare could induce me to this; that I was their fellow-prisoner, and now got nothing by preaching. I was sorry, I said, to hear them so very profane; because they got nothing by it, but might

might lose a great deal: "For be assured, my friends," cried I, "for you are my friends, however the world may disclaim your friendship, though you swore twelve thousand oaths in a day, it would not put one penny in your purse. Then what signifies calling every moment upon the devil, and courting his friendship, since you find how scurvily he uses you? He has given you nothing here, you find, but a mouthful of oaths and an empty belly; and, by the best accounts I have of him, he will give you nothing that's good hereafter."

"If used ill in our dealings with one man, we naturally go elsewhere. Were it not worth your while, then, just to try how you may like the usage of another master, who gives you fair promises at least, to come to him? Surely, my friends, of all stupidity in the world, his must be greatest, who, after robbing an house, runs to the thief-takers for protection. And yet, how are you more wise? You are all seeking comfort from one that has already betrayed you, applying to a more malicious being than any thief-taker of them all; for they only decoy, and then hang you; but he decoys and hangs, and, what is worst of all, will not let you loose when the hangman has done."

When I had concluded, I received the compliments of my audience, some of whom came and shook me by the hand, swearing that I was a very honest fellow, and that they desired my farther acquaintance. I therefore promised to repeat my lecture next day, and

actually conceived some hopes of making a reformation here; for it had ever been my opinion, that no man was past the hour of amendment, every heart lying open to the shafts of reproof, if the archer could but take a proper aim. When I had thus satisfied my mind, I went back to my apartment, where my wife prepared a frugal meal, while Mr Jenkinson begged leave to add his dinner to ours, and partake of the pleasure, as he was kind enough to express it, of my conversation. He had not yet seen my family; for, as they came to my apartment by a door in the narrow passage already described, by this means they avoided the common prison. Jenkinson, at the first interview, therefore, seemed not a little struck with the beauty of my youngest daughter, which her penfive air contributed to heighten; and my little ones did not pass unnoticed.

"Alas! Doctor," cried he, "these children are too handsome and too good for such a place as this!"

"Why, Mr Jenkinson," replied I, "thank Heaven, my children are pretty tolerable in morals; and if they be good, it matters little for the rest."

"I fancy, Sir," returned my fellow-prisoner, "that it must give you great comfort to have this little family about you."

"A comfort, Mr Jenkinson," replied I; "yes, it is indeed a comfort, and I would not be without them for all the world; for they can make a dungeon seem a palace. There is but one way in this

"life

" life of wounding my happiness, and that is, by injuring them."

" I am afraid then, Sir," cried he, " that I am in some measure culpable; for I think I see here (looking at my son Moses) one that I have injured, and by whom I wish to be forgiven."

My son immediately recollected his voice and features, though he had before seen him in disguise, and taking him by the hand, with a smile, forgave him. " Yet," continued he, " I can't help wondering at what you could see in my face, to think me a proper mark for deception."

" My dear Sir," continued the other, " it was not your face, but your white stockings, and the black ribband in your hair, that allured me." But, no disparagement to your parts, I have deceived wiser men than you in my time; and yet, with all my tricks, the blockheads have been too many for me at last."

" I suppose," cried my son, " that the narrative of such a life as yours must be extremely instructing and amusing."

" Not much of either," returned Mr Jenkinson. " Those relations which describe the tricks and vices only of mankind, by increasing our suspicions in life, retard our success. The traveller that distrusts every person he meets, and turns back upon the appearance of every man that looks like a robber, seldom arrives in time at his journey's end."

" Indeed, I think, from my own experience, that

“ the knowing one is the silliest fellow under the sun.
“ I was thought cunning from my very childhood;
“ when but seven years old, the ladies would say
“ that I was a perfect little man; at fourteen, I knew
“ the world, cocked my hat, and loved the ladies;
“ at twenty, though I was perfectly honest, yet every
“ one thought me so cunning, that not one would
“ trust me. Thus I was at last obliged to turn
“ sharper in my own defence, and have lived ever
“ since, my head throbbing with schemes to deceive,
“ and my heart palpitating with fears of detection.

“ I used often to laugh at your honest simple
“ neighbour Flamborough; and, one way or another,
“ generally cheated him once a-year: yet still the
“ honest man went forward without suspicion, and
“ grew rich; while I still continued tricksy and cun-
“ ning, and was poor, without the consolation of
“ being honest.

“ However,” continued he, “ let me know your
“ case, and what has brought you here; perhaps,
“ though I have not skill to avoid a goal myself, I
“ may extricate my friends.”

In compliance with his curiosity, I informed him of
the whole train of accidents and follies that had plun-
ged me into my present troubles, and my utter ina-
bility to get free.

After hearing my story, and pausing some minutes,
he flapt his forehead, as if he had hit upon something
material, and took his leave, saying, he would try
what could be done.

C H A P. XXVII.

The same subject continued.

THE next morning I communicated to my wife and children the scheme I had planned of reforming the prisoners, which they received with universal disapprobation, alledging the impossibility and impropriety of it ; adding, that my endeavours would no way contribute to their amendment, but might probably disgrace my calling.

" Excuse me," returned I, " these people, however fallen, are still men, and that is a very good title to my affections. Good counsel rejected, returns to enrich the giver's bosom ; and though the instruction I communicate may not mend them, yet it will assuredly mend myself. If these wretches, my children, were princes, there would be thousands ready to offer their ministry ; but, in my opinion, the heart that is buried in a dungeon is as precious as that seated upon a throne. Yes, my treasures, if I can mend them I will ; perhaps they will not all despise me. Perhaps I may catch up even one from the gulph, and that will be great gain ; for, is there upon earth a gem so precious as the human soul ?"

Thus saying, I left them, and descended to the common prison, where I found the prisoners very merry, expecting my arrival; and each prepared with some goal-trick to play upon the Doctor. Thus, as I was going to begin, one turned my wig awry, as if by accident, and then asked my pardon. A second, who stood at some distance, had a knack of spitting through his teeth, which fell in showers upon my book. A third would cry, *Amen*, in such an affected tone, as gave the rest great delight. A fourth had flily picked my pocket of my spectacles. But there was one whose trick gave more universal pleasure than all the rest; for observing the manner in which I had disposed my books on the table before me, he very dextrously displaced one of them, and put an obscene jest-book of his own in the place. However, I took no notice of all that this mischievous group of little beings could do; but went on, perfectly sensible that what was ridiculous in my attempt would excite mirth only the first or second time, while, what was serious, would be permanent. My design succeeded; and, in less than six days, some were penitent, and all attentive.

It was now that I applauded my perseverance and address, at thus giving sensibility to wretches divested of every moral feeling; and now began to think of doing them temporal services also, by rendering their situation somewhat more comfortable. Their time had hitherto been divided between famine and excess, tumultuous riot and bitter repining. Their only em- ployment

ployment was quarrelling among each other, playing at cribbage, and cutting tobacco stoppers. From this last mode of idle industry, I took the hint of setting such as chose to work at cutting pegs for tobacconists and shoemakers, the proper wood being bought by a general subscription, and, when manufactured, sold by my appointment; so that each earned something every day; a trifle indeed, but sufficient to maintain him.

I did not stop here, but instituted fines for the punishment of immorality, and rewards for peculiar industry. Thus, in less than a fortnight, I had formed them into something social and humane, and had the pleasure of regarding myself as a legislator, who had brought men from their native ferocity into friendship and obedience.

And it were highly to be wished, that legislative power would thus direct the law rather to reformation than severity; that it would seem convinced, that the work of eradicating crimes is not by making punishments familiar, but formidable. Then, instead of our present prisons, which find, or make men guilty, which inclose wretches for the commission of one crime, and return them, if returned alive, fitted for the perpetration of thousands; we should see, as in other parts of Europe, places of penitence and solitude, where the accused might be attended by such as could give them repentance, if guilty, or new motives to virtue, if innocent. And this, but not the increasing of punishments, is the way to mend a state: nor can I avoid even

even questioning the validity of that right which social combinations have assumed, of capitally punishing offences of a slight nature. In cases of murder, their right is obvious; as it is the duty of us all, from the law of self-defence, to cut off that man who has shewn a disregard for the life of another. Against such, all nature rises in arms; but it is not so against him who steals my property. Natural law gives me no right to take away his life; as, by that, the horse he steals is as much his property as mine. If then I have any right, it must be from a compact made between us, that he who deprives the other of his horse shall die. But this is a false compact; because no man has a right to barter his life, no more than to take it away, as it is not his own; and beside, the compact is inadequate, and would be set aside even in a court of modern equity, as there is a great penalty for a very trifling convenience, since it is far better that two men should live, than that one man should ride. But a compact that is false between two men, is equally so between an hundred, or an hundred thousand: for as ten millions of circles can never make a square, so the united voice of myriads cannot lend the smallest foundation to falsehood. It is thus that Reason speaks, and untutored Nature says the same thing. Savages that are directed by natural law alone are very tender of the lives of each other; they seldom shed blood, but to retaliate former cruelty.

Our Saxon ancestors, fierce as they were in war, had but few executions in times of peace; and in all commencing

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commencing governments, that have the print of nature still strong upon them, scarce any crime is held capital.

It is among the citizens of a refined community that penal laws, which are in the hands of the rich, are laid upon the poor. Government, while it grows older, seems to acquire the moroseness of age; and, as if our property were become dearer in proportion as it increased, as if the more enormous our wealth, the more extensive our fears, all our possessions are paled up with new edicts every day, and hung round with gibbets to scare every invader.

I cannot tell whether it is from the number of our penal laws, or the licentiousness of our people, that this country should show more convicts in a year, than half the dominions of Europe united. Perhaps it is owing to both; for they mutually produce each other. When, by indiscriminate penal laws, a nation beholds the same punishment affixed to dissimilar degrees of guilt; from perceiving no distinction in the penalty, the people are led to lose all sense of distinction in the crime; and this distinction is the bulwark of all morality: thus, the multitude of laws produce new vices, and new vices call for fresh restraints.

It were to be wished then, that power, instead of contriving new laws to punish vice, instead of drawing hard the cords of society till a convulsion come to burst them, instead of cutting away wretches as useless before we have tried their utility, instead of converting correction into vengeance; it were to be wished that we tried the restrictive arts of government,

and

and made law the protector, but not the tyrant of the people. We should then find, that creatures, whose souls are held as dross, only wanted the hand of a refiner ; we should then find, that wretches, now stuck up for long tortures, lest luxury should feel a momentary pang, might, if properly treated, serve to finew the state in times of danger ; that as their faces are like ours, their hearts are so too ; that few minds are so base as that perseverance cannot amend ; that a man may see his last crime without dying for it ; and that very little blood will serve to cement our security.

C H A P. XXVIII.

Happiness and misery rather the result of prudence than of virtue, in this life ; temporal evils, or felicities, being regarded by Heaven as things merely in themselves trifling, and unworthy its care in the distribution.

I HAD now been confined more than a fortnight, but had not, since my arrival, been visited by my dear Olivia, and I greatly longed to see her. Having communicated my wishes to my wife, the next morning the poor girl entered my apartment, leaning on

her

her sister's arm. The change which I saw in her countenance struck me. The numberless graces that once resided there were now fled; and the hand of death seemed to have moulded every feature to alarm me. Her temples were sunk, her forehead was tense, and a fatal paleness sat upon her cheek.

"I am glad to see thee, my dear," cried I; "but why this dejection, Livy? I hope, my love, you have too great a regard for me, to permit disappointment thus to undermine a life which I prize as my own. Be cheerful, child; and we yet may, see happier days."

"You have ever, Sir," replied she, "been kind to me; and it adds to my pain, that I shall never have an opportunity of sharing that happiness you promise. Happiness, I fear, is no longer reserved for me here; and I long to be rid of a place where I have only found distress. Indeed, Sir, I wish you would make a proper submission to Mr Thornhill; it may, in some measure, induce him to pity you, and it will give me relief in dying."

"Never, child," replied I, "never will I be brought to acknowledge my daughter a prostitute; for, though the world may look upon your offence with scorn, let it be mine to regard it as a mark of credulity, not of guilt. My dear, I am no way miserable in this place, however dismal it may seem; and be assured, that, while you continue to bless me by living, he shall never have my consent to make you more wretched by marrying another."

After

After the departure of my daughter, my fellow-prisoner, who was by at this interview, sensibly enough expostulated upon my obstinacy, in refusing a submission which promised to give me freedom. He observed, that the rest of my family was not to be sacrificed to the peace of one child alone, and she the only one who had offended me. "Besides," added he, "I don't know if it be just thus to obstruct the union of man and wife, which you do at present, by refusing to consent to a match which you cannot hinder, but may render unhappy."

"Sir," replied I, "you are unacquainted with the man that oppresses us. I am very sensible, that no submission I can make, could procure me liberty, even for an hour. I am told, that, even in this very room, a debtor of his, no later than last year, died for want. But, though my submission and approbation could transfer me from hence to the most beautiful apartment he is possessed of; yet I would grant neither, as something whispers me, that it would be giving a sanction to adultery. While my daughter lives, no other marriage of his shall ever be legal in my eye. Were she removed, indeed, I should be the basest of men, from any resentment of my own, to attempt putting asunder those who wish for an union. No, villain as he is, I should then wish him married, to prevent the consequences of his future debaucheries. But now, should I not be the most cruel of all fathers, to sign an instrument which must send my child to the grave, merely to

" avoid

" avoid a prison myself ; and thus, to escape one pang, " break my child's heart with a thousand !"

He acquiesced in the justice of this answer ; but could not avoid observing, that he feared my daughter's life was already too much wasted to keep me long a prisoner. " However," continued he, " though you " refuse to submit to the nephew, I hope you have no " objections to laying your case before the uncle, who " has the first character in the kingdom for every " thing that is just and good. I would advise you to " send him a letter by the post, intimating all his ne- " phew's ill usage ; and my life for it, that in three " days you shall have an answer." I thanked him for the hint, and instantly set about complying ; but I wanted paper ; and, unluckily, all our money had been laid out that morning in provisions ; however, he supplied me.

For the three ensuing days, I was in a state of anxiety, to know what reception my letter might meet with ; but, in the mean time, was frequently solicited by my wife to submit to any conditions rather than remain here ; and, every hour, received repeated accounts of the decline of my daughter's health. The third day and the fourth arrived ; but I received no answer to my letter : the complaints of a stranger against a favourite nephew were no way likely to succeed ; so that these hopes soon vanished, like all my former. My mind, however, still supported itself, though confinement and bad air began to make a visible alteration in my health ; and my arm, that had

suffered in the fire, grew worse. My children, however, sat by me, and, while I was stretched on my straw, read to me by turns, or listened and wept at my instructions. But my daughter's health declined faster than mine: every message from her contributed to increase my apprehensions and pain. The fifth morning after I had written the letter, which was sent to Sir William Thornhill, I was alarmed with an account that she was speechless. Now it was that confinement was truly painful to me; my soul was bursting from its prison to be near the pillow of my child, to comfort, to strengthen her, to receive her last wishes, and teach her soul the way to heaven! Another account came; she was expiring; and yet I was debarred the small comfort of weeping by her. My fellow-prisoner, some time after, came with the last account. He bade me be patient. She was dead! The next morning he returned, and found me with my two little ones, now my only companions, who were using all their innocent efforts to comfort me. They intreated to read to me, and bade me not to cry, for I was now too old to weep. "And is not my sister
" an angel now, Pappa?" cried the eldest; "and
" why then are you sorry for her? I wish I were an
" angel out of this frightful place, if my Pappa were
" with me." "Yes," added my youngest darling,
" Heaven, where my sister is, is a finer place than
" this; and there are none but good people there,
" and the people here are very bad."

Mr
had said, and you have; indeed you are no mistresses
Lambeth.

Mr Jenkinson interrupted their harmless prattle by observing, that, now my daughter was no more, I should seriously think of the rest of my family, and attempt to save my own life, which was every day declining for want of necessaries and wholesome air. He added, that it was now incumbent on me to sacrifice any pride or resentment of my own, to the welfare of those who depended on me for support; and that I was now, both by reason and justice, obliged to try to reconcile my landlord.

"Heaven be praised," replied I, "there is no pride left me now. I should detest my own heart if I saw either pride or resentment lurking there. On the contrary, as my oppressor has been once my parishioner, I hope one day to present him up an un-polluted soul at the eternal tribunal. No, Sir, I have no resentment now; and though he has taken from me what I held dearer than all his treasures; though he has wrung my heart, for I am sick almost to fainting, very sick, my fellow-prisoner, yet that shall never inspire me with vengeance. I am now willing to approve his marriage; and if this submission can do him any pleasure, let him know, that, if I have done him any injury, I am sorry for it." Mr Jenkinson took pen and ink, and wrote down my submission, nearly as I have expressed it, to which I signed my name. My son was employed to carry the letter to Mr Thornhill, who was then at his seat in the country. He went, and in about six hours returned with a verbal answer. He had some diffi-

culty, he said, to get a sight of his landlord, as the servants were insolent and suspicious; but he accidentally saw him as he was going out upon business, preparing for his marriage, which was to be in three days. He continued to inform us, that he stepped up, in the humblest manner, and delivered the letter; which, when Mr Thornhill had read, he said, That all submission was now too late, and unnecessary; that he had heard of our application to his uncle, which met with the contempt it deserved; and as for the rest, that all future applications should be directed to his attorney, not to him. He observed, however, that, as he had a very good opinion of the discretion of the two young ladies, they might have been the most agreeable intercessors.

“ Well, Sir,” said I to my fellow-prisoner, “ you now discover the temper of the man that oppresses me. He can at once be facetious and cruel; but let him use me as he will, I shall soon be free, in spite of all his bolts to restrain me. I am now drawing towards an abode that looks brighter as I approach it: this expectation cheers my afflictions; and, though I leave an helpless family of orphans behind me, yet they will not be utterly forsaken; some friend, perhaps, will be found to assist them, for the sake of their poor father; and some may charitably relieve them, for the sake of their heavenly Father.”

Just as I spoke, my wife, whom I had not seen that day before, appeared with looks of terror, and making

efforts,

efforts, but unable to speak. "Why, my love," cried I, "why will you thus increase my afflictions by your own? What though no submissions can turn our severe master, though he has doomed me to die in this place of wretchedness, and though we have lost a darling child, yet still you will find comfort in your other children, when I shall be no more." "We have indeed lost," returned she, "a darling child. My Sophia, my dearest, is gone, snatched from us, carried off by ruffians!"

"How, Madam," cried my fellow-prisoner, "Miss Sophia carried off by villains! sure it cannot be?"

She could only answer with a fixed look and a flood of tears. But one of the prisoner's wives, who was present, and came in with her, gave us a more distinct account: she informed us, that, as my wife, my daughter, and herself, were taking a walk together on the great road, a little way out of the village, a post-chaise and pair drove up to them, and instantly stopped. Upon which a well dressed man, but not Mr Thornhill, stepping out, clasped my daughter round the waist, and forcing her in, bid the postilion drive on, so that they were out of sight in a moment.

"Now," cried I, "the sum of my miseries is made up; nor is it in the power of any thing on earth to give me another pang. What! not one left! not to leave me one! the monster! the child that was next my heart! she had the beauty of an angel, and almost the wisdom of an angel. But support that woman, nor let her fall. Not to leave

“ me one !”—“ Alas ! my husband,” said my wife,
“ you seem to want comfort even more than I. Our
“ distresses are great ; but I could bear this, and
“ more, if I saw you but easy. They may take a
“ way my children, and all the world, if they leave
“ me but you.”

My son, who was present, endeavoured to moderate our grief ; he bade us take comfort, for he hoped that we might still have reason to be thankful.—“ My child,” cried I, “ look round the world, and
“ see if there be any happiness left me now. Is not
“ every ray of comfort shut out ? while all our bright
“ prospects only lie beyond the grave !”—“ My
“ dear father,” returned he, “ I hope there is still
“ something that will give you an interval of satis-
“ faction ; for I have a letter from my brother
“ George.”—“ What of him, child ?” interrupted I ; “ does he know our misery ? I hope my boy is
“ exempt from any part of what his wretched family
“ suffers.”—“ Yes, Sir,” returned he, “ he is per-
“ fectly gay, cheerful, and happy. His letter brings
“ nothing but good news ; he is the favourite of his
“ colonel, who promises to procure him the very next
“ lieutenancy that becomes vacant.”

“ And are you sure of all this ?” cried my wife ;
“ are you sure that nothing ill has befallen my boy ?”
—“ Nothing, indeed, Madam,” returned my son,
“ you shall see the letter, which will give you the
“ highest pleasure ; and if any thing can procure
“ you comfort, I am sure that will.”—“ But are
“ you

"you sure," still repeated she, "that the letter is
"from himself, and that he is really so happy!"—
"Yes, Madam," replied he, "it is certainly his; and
"he will one day be the credit and the support of
"our family!"— "Then I thank Providence," cried
she, "that my last letter to him has miscarried.
"Yes, my dear," continued she, turning to me, "I
"will now confess, that, though the hand of Hea-
"ven is sore upon us in other instances, it has been
"favourable here. By the last letter I wrote my son,
"which was in the bitterness of anger, I desired
"him, upon his mother's blessing, and if he had the
"heart of a man, to see justice done his father and
"sister, and avenge our cause. But, thanks be to
"Him that directs all things, it has miscarried; and
"I am at rest." "Woman," cried I, "thou hast
"done very ill; and at another time my reproaches
"might have been more severe. Oh! what a tre-
"mendous gulph hast thou escaped, that would have
"buried both thee and him in endless ruin! Provi-
"dence, indeed, has here been kinder to us than we
"to ourselves. It has reserved that son to be the fa-
"ther and protector of my children when I shall be
"away. How unjustly did I complain of being
"stripped of every comfort, when still I hear that he
"is happy, and insensible of our afflictions; still kept
"in reserve to support his widowed mother, and to
"protect his brothers and sisters! But what sisters
"has he left? he has no sisters now; they are all
"gone, robbed from me, and I am undone!"—

"Father,"

“ Father,” interrupted my son, “ I beg you will give
“ me leave to read his letter; I know it will please
“ you.” Upon which, with my permission, he read
as follows:

“ HONoured SIR,

“ I have called off my imagination a few moments
“ from the pleasures that surround me, to fix it up-
“ on objects that are still more pleasing, the deay lit-
“ tle fire-side at home. My fancy draws that harm-
“ less group, as listening to every line of this with
“ great composure. I view those faces with delight,
“ which never felt the deforming hand of ambition
“ or distress! But whatever your happiness may be
“ at home, I am sure it will be some addition to it,
“ to hear that I am perfectly pleased with my situa-
“ tion, and every way happy here.

“ Our regiment is countermanded, and is not to
“ leave the kingdom; the colonel, who professes
“ himself my friend, takes me with him to all com-
“ panies where he is acquainted; and after my first
“ visit, I generally find myself received with increa-
“ sed respect upon repeating it. I danced last night
“ with Lady G——, and could I forget you know
“ whom, I might be perhaps successful. But it is
“ my fate still to remember others, while I am my-
“ self forgotten by most of my absent friends; and
“ in this number, I fear, Sir, that I must consider you;
“ for I have long expected the pleasure of a letter
“ from home, to no purpose. Olivia and Sophia too
“ promised

“ promised to write, but seem to have forgotten me.
“ Tell them they are two arrant little baggages, and
“ that I am this moment in a most violent passion
“ with them; yet still I know not how, though I
“ want to bluster a little, my heart is respondent only
“ to softer emotions. Then tell them, Sir, that, after
“ all, I love them affectionately, and be assured of
“ my ever remaining

“ Your dutiful son.”

“ In all our miseries,” cried I, “ what thanks
“ have we not to return, that one at least of our fa-
“ mily is exempted from what we suffer? Heaven be
“ his guard, and keep my boy thus happy, to be the
“ supporter of his widowed mother, and the father
“ of these two babes, which is all the patrimony I
“ can now bequeath him. May he keep their inno-
“ cence from the temptations of want, and be their
“ conductor in the paths of honour!” I had scarce
said these words, when a noise like that of a tu-
mult seemed to proceed from the prison below;
it died away soon after, and a clanking of fetters was
heard along the passage that led to my apartment.
The keeper of the prison entered, holding a man all
bloody, wounded, and fettered with the heaviest irons.
I looked with compassion on the wretch as he ap-
proached me, but with horror, when I found it was
my own son. “ My George! my George! and do I
“ behold thee thus? Wounded! fettered! Is this thy
“ happiness? Is this the manner you return to me?

“ Q

“ O that this sight could break my heart at once, and
“ let me die !”

“ Where, Sir, is your fortitude ?” returned my
son with an intrepid voice. “ I must suffer ; my life
“ is forfeited, and let them take it.”

I tried to restrain my passions for a few minutes in
silence ; but I thought I should have died with the
effort.—“ O my boy, my heart weeps to behold
“ thee thus, and I cannot, cannot help it. In the mo-
“ ment that I thought thee blest, and prayed for thy
“ safety, to behold thee thus again ! Chained, wound-
“ ed. And yet the death of the youthful is happy.
“ But I am old, a very old man, and have lived to see
“ this day : to see my children, all untimely falling
“ about me, while I continue a wretched survivor in
“ the midst of ruin ! May all the curses that ever sunk
“ a soul fall heavy upon the murderer of my chil-
“ dren ! May he live, like me to see.—”

“ Hold, Sir,” replied my son, “ or I shall blush
“ for thee. How, Sir, forgetful of your age, your
“ holy calling, thus to arrogate the justice of Heaven,
“ and fling those curses upward that must soon de-
“ scend to crush thy own grey head with destruction !
“ No, Sir, let it be your care now to fit me for that
“ vile death I must shortly suffer, to arm me with
“ hope and resolution, to give me courage to drink of
“ that bitterness which must shortly be my portion.”

“ My child, you must not die. I am sure no of-
“ fence of thine can deserve so vile a punishment : my

“ George

“ George could never be guilty of any crime to make
“ his ancestors ashamed of him.”

“ Mine, Sir,” returned my son, “ is, I fear, an un-
“ pardonable one. When I received my mother’s
“ letter from home, I immediately came down, deter-
“ mined to punish the betrayer of our honour, and
“ sent him an order to meet me, which he answered,
“ not in person, but by his dispatching four of his do-
“ mestics to seize me. I wounded one, who first as-
“ faulted me, and, I fear, desperately ; but the rest
“ made me their prisoner. The coward is determined
“ to put the law in execution against me : the proofs
“ are undeniable. I have sent a challenge ; and as
“ I am the first transgressor upon the statute, I see no
“ hopes of pardon. But you have often charmed me
“ with your lessons of fortitude ; let me now, Sir, find
“ them in your example.”

“ And, my son, you shall find them. I am now
“ raised above this world, and all the pleasures it
“ can produce. From this moment, I break from my
“ heart all the ties that held it down to earth, and
“ will prepare to fit us both for eternity. Yes, my
“ son, I will point out the way, and my soul shall
“ guide yours in the ascent, for we will take our
“ flight together. I now see, and am convinced you
“ can expect no pardon here ; and I can only exhort
“ you to seek it at that greatest tribunal, where we
“ both shall shortly answer. But let us not be nig-
“ gardly in our exhortation, but let all our fellow-
“ prisoners have a share. Good goaler, let them be
“ permitted

"permitted to stand here, while I attempt to im-
"prove them." Thus saying, I made an effort to
rise from my straw, but wanted strength, and was able
only to recline against the wall. The prisoners assem-
bled according to my directions, for they loved to hear
my counsel; my son and his mother supported me on
either side: I looked and saw that none were want-
ing, and then addressed them with the following ex-
hortation.

C H A P. XXIX.

*The equal dealings of Providence demonstrated with re-
gard to the happy and the miserable here below. That,
from the nature of pleasure and pain, the wretched
must be repaid the balance of their sufferings in the
life hereafter.*

MY friends, my children, and fellow-sufferers: When I reflect on the distribution of good and evil here below, I find that much has been given man to enjoy, yet still more to suffer. Though we should examine the whole world, we shall not find one man so happy as to have nothing left to wish for; but we daily

daily see thousands, who, by suicide, show us they have nothing left to hope. In this life, then, it appears, that we cannot be entirely blest ; but yet we may be completely miserable !

Why man should thus feel pain—why our wretchedness should be requisite in the formation of universal felicity—why, when all other systems are made perfect by the perfection of their subordinate parts, the great system should require, for its perfection, parts that are not only subordinate to others, but imperfect in themselves ? These are questions that never can be explained, and might be useless, if known. On this subject, Providence has thought fit to elude our curiosity, satisfied with granting us motives to consolation.

In this situation, man has called in the friendly assistance of philosophy ; and Heaven, seeing the incapacity of that to console him, has given him the aid of religion. The consolations of philosophy are very amusing, but often fallacious. It tells us, that life is filled with comforts, if we will but enjoy them ; and, on the other hand, that though we unavoidably have miseries here, life is short, and they will soon be over. Thus do these consolations destroy each other ; for, if life is a place of comfort, its shortness must be misery ; and if it be long, our griefs are protracted. Thus, philosophy is weak ; but religion comforts in an higher strain. Man is here, it tells us, fitting up his mind, and preparing it for another abode. When the good man leaves the body, and is all a glorious mind, he will find he has been making himself a heaven of happiness.

pines here ; while the wretch that has been maimed and contaminated by his vices, shrinks from his body with terror, and finds that he has anticipated the vengeance of Heaven. To religion then we must hold, in every circumstance of life, for our truest comfort ; for, if already we are happy, it is a pleasure to think that we can make that happiness unending ; and if we are miserable, it is very consoling to think that there is a place of rest. Thus, to the fortunate, religion holds out a continuance of bliss ; to the wretched, a change from pain.

But though religion is very kind to all men, it has promised peculiar rewards to the unhappy ; the sick, the naked, the houseless, the heavy-laden, and the prisoner, have ever most frequent promises in our sacred law. The author of our religion every where professes himself the wretch's friend ; and, unlike the false ones of this world, bestows all his caresses upon the forlorn. The unthinking have censured this as partiality, as a preference, without merit to deserve it. But they never reflect, that it is not in the power even of Heaven itself, to make the offer of unceasing felicity as great a gift to the happy as to the miserable. To the first, eternity is but a single blessing, since, at most, it but increases what they already possess. To the latter, it is a double advantage ; for it diminishes their pain here, and rewards them with heavenly bliss hereafter.

But providence is, in another respect, kinder to the poor than the rich ; for as it thus makes the life after death more desirable, so it smoothes the passage thither.

ther. The wretched have had a long familiarity with every face of terror. The man of sorrows lays himself quietly down, without possessions to regret, and but few ties to stop his departure: he feels only nature's pang in the final separation; and this is no way greater than he has often fainted under before: for, after a certain degree of pain, every new breach that death opens in the constitution, nature kindly covers with insensibility.

Thus, Providence has given the wretched two advantages over the happy in this life, greater felicity in dying, and in heaven all that superiority of pleasure which arises from contrasted enjoyment. And this superiority, my friends, is no small advantage, and seems to be one of the pleasures of the poor man in the parable; for though he was already in heaven, and felt all the raptures it could give, yet it was mentioned as an addition to his happiness, that he had once been wretched, and now was comforted; that he had known what it was to be miserable, and now felt what it was to be happy.

Thus, my friends, you see religion does what philosophy could never do: it shows the equal dealings of Heaven to the happy and the unhappy, and levels all human enjoyments to nearly the same standard; it gives to both rich and poor the same happiness hereafter, and equal hopes to aspire after it. But if the rich have the advantage of enjoying pleasure here, the poor have the endless satisfaction of knowing what it was once to be miserable, when crowned with endless felicity

hereafter ; and, even though this should be called a small advantage, yet, being an eternal one, it must make up by duration what the temporal happiness of the great may have exceeded by intenseness.

These are therefore the consolations which the wretched have peculiar to themselves, and in which they are above the rest of mankind ; in other respects, they are below them. They who would know the miseries of the poor, must see life, and endure it. To declaim on the temporal advantages they enjoy, is only repeating what none either believe or practise. The men who have the necessaries of living are not poor ; and they who want them must be miserable. Yes, my friends, we must be miserable. No vain efforts of a refined imagination can soothe the wants of nature, can give elastic sweetness to the dank vapour of a dungeon, or ease to the throbings of a broken heart. Let the philosopher from his couch of softness tell us that we can resist all these. Alas ! the effort by which we resist them is still the greatest pain ! Death is slight, and any man may sustain it ; but torments are dreadful, and these no man can endure.

To us, then, my friends, the promises of happiness in heaven should be peculiarly dear ; for, if our reward be in this life alone, we are then, indeed, of all men the most miserable. When I look round these gloomy walls, made to terrify as well as to confine us ; this light, that only serves to show the horrors of the place ; those shackles, that tyranny has imposed, or crimes made necessary ; when I survey these eman-

ciated

iated looks, and hear those groans; O my friends! what a glorious exchange would heaven be for these. To fly through regions unconfined as air, to bask in the sunshine of eternal bliss, to carrol over endless hymns of praise, to have no master to threaten or insult us, but the form of Goodness himself for ever in our eyes; when I think of these things, death becomes the messenger of very glad tidings; when I think of these things, his sharpest arrow becomes the staff of my support; when I think of these things, what is there in life worth having? when I think of these things, what is there that should not be spurned away? Kings in their palaces should groan for such advantages; but we, humbled as we are, should yearn for them.

And shall these things be ours? Ours they will certainly be, if we but try for them; and, what is a comfort, we are shut out from many temptations that would retard our pursuit. Only let us try for them, and they will certainly be ours, and, what is still a comfort, shortly too: for if we look back on past life, it appears but a very short span, and whatever we may think of the rest of life, it will yet be found of less duration: as we grow older the days seem to grow shorter, and our intimacy with time ever lessens the perception of his stay. Then let us take comfort now, for we shall soon be at our journey's end; we shall soon lay down the heavy burden laid by Heaven upon us: and though death, the only friend of the wretched, for a little while mocks the weary traveller with the view, and, like his horizon, still flies before him; yet the

time will certainly and shortly come, when we shall cease from our toil; when the luxurious great ones of the world shall no more tread us to the earth; when we shall think with pleasure on our sufferings below; when we shall be surrounded with all our friends, or such as deserved our friendship; when our bliss shall be unutterable, and still, to crown all, unending.

C H A P. XXX.

Happier prospects begin to appear. Let us be inflexible, and fortune will at last change in our favour.

WHEN I had thus finished, and my audience was retired, the goaler, who was one of the most humane of his profession, hoped I would not be displeased, as what he did was but his duty; observing, that he must be obliged to remove my son into a stronger cell, but that he should be permitted to revisit me every morning. I thanked him for his clemency, and, grasping my boy's hand, bade him farewell, and be mindful of the great duty that was before him.

I again therefore laid me down, and one of my little ones sat by my bed-side reading, when Mr Jenkins entering, informed me that there was news of my daughter;

daughter; for that she was seen by a person, about two hours before, in a strange gentleman's company, and that they had stopped at a neighbouring village for refreshment, and seemed as if returning to town. He had scarce delivered this news, when the goatherd came, with looks of haste and pleasure, to inform me that my daughter was found. Moses came running in, a moment after, crying out that his sister Sophy was below, and coming up with our old friend Mr Burchell.

Just as he delivered this news, my dearest girl entered, and with looks almost wild with pleasure, ran to kiss me in a transport of affection. Her mother's tears and silence also showed her pleasure. — “Here, “pappa,” cried the charming girl, “here is the brave “man to whom I owe my delivery; to this gentle-“man's intrepidity I am indebted for my happiness “and safety — — ? A kiss from Mr Burchell, whose pleasure seemed even greater than hers, interrupted what she was going to add.

“Ah, Mr Burchell,” cried I, “this is but a “wretched habitation you now find us in; and we “are now very different from what you last saw us. “You were ever our friend: we have long discovered “our errors with regard to you, and repented of our “ingratitude. After the vile usage you then received “at my hands, I am almost ashamed to behold your “face; yet I hope, you'll forgive me, as I was decei-“ved by a base ungenerous wretch, who, under the “mask of friendship, has undone me.”

“It

“ It is impossible,” replied Mr Burchell, “ that I should forgive you, as you never deserved my resentment. I partly saw your delusion then, and, as it was out of my power to restrain, I could only pity it.”

“ It was ever my conjecture,” cried I, “ that your mind was noble; but now I find it so. But tell me, my dear child, how hast thou been relieved, or who the russians were who carried thee away?”

“ Indeed, Sir,” replied she, “ as to the villain who carried me off, I am yet ignorant. For as my mamma and I were walking out, he came behind us, and, almost before I could call for help, forced me into the post-chaise, and in an instant the horses drove away. I met several on the road, to whom I cried out for assistance; but they disregarded my intreaties. In the mean time, the russian himself used every art to hinder me from crying out: he flattered and threatened by turns, and swore, that if I continued but silent, he intended no harm. In the mean time, I had broken the canvas that he had drawn up, and whom should I perceive at some distance but our old friend Mr Burchell, walking along with his usual swiftness, with the great stick for which we used so much to ridicule him. As soon as we came within hearing, I called out to him by name, and intreated his help. I repeated my exclamations several times; upon which, with a very loud voice, he bid the postilion stop; but the boy took no notice, but drove on with still greater speed.

“ speed. I now thought he could never overtake us, “ when, in less than a minute, I saw Mr Burchell “ come running up by the side of the horses, and with “ one blow, knock the postilion to the ground: the “ horses, when he was fallen, soon stopt of themselves; “ and the russian stepping out, with oaths and me- “ naces drew his sword, and ordered him at his peril “ to retire; but Mr Burchell running up, shivered “ his sword to pieces, and then pursued him for near “ a quarter of a mile; but he made his escape. I “ was at this time come out myself, willing to assist “ my deliverer; but he soon returned to me in tri- “ umph. The postilion, who was recovered, was go- “ ing to make his escape too; but Mr Burchell order- “ ed him at his peril to mount again, and drive back “ to town. Finding it impossible to resist, he reluc- “ tantly complied; though the wound he had received “ seemed, to me at least, to be dangerous. He con- “ tinued to complain of the pain as we drove along, “ so that he at last excited Mr Burchell’s compassion, “ who, at my request, exchanged him for another, at “ an inn where we called on our return.”

“ Welcome, then,” cried I, “ my child; and thou, “ her gallant deliverer, a thousand welcomes. Though “ our cheer is but wretched, yet our hearts are ready “ to receive you. And now, Mr Burchell, as you “ have delivered my girl, if you think her a recom- “ pence, she is yours. If you can stoop to an alliance “ with a family so poor as mine, take her, obtain her “ consent, as I know you have her heart, and you “ have

" have mine. And let me tell you, Sir, that I give
" you no small treasure ; she has been celebrated for
" beauty, it is true ; but that is not my meaning, I
" give you up a treasure in her mind."

" But I suppose, Sir," cried Mr Burchell, " that you
" are apprised of my circumstances, and of my inca-
" pacity to support her as she deserves?"

" If your present objection," replied I, " be meant
" as an evasion of my offer, I desist : but I know no
" man so worthy to deserve her as you ; and if I could
" give her thousands, and thousands sought her from
" me, yet my honest, brave Burchell, shoud be my
" dearest choice."

To all this, his silence alone seemed to give a mortifying refusal ; and, without the least reply to my offer, he demanded if we could not be furnished with refreshments from the next inn ? To which being answered in the affirmative, he ordered them to send in the best dinner that could be provided upon such short notice. He spoke also a dozen of their best wine, and some cordials for me ; adding, with a smile, that he would stretch a little for once, and, though in a prison, asserted he was never better disposed to be merry. The waiter soon made his appearance with preparations for dinner ; a table was lent us by the goaler, who seemed remarkably assiduous ; the wine was disposed in order, and two very well drest dishes were brought in.

My daughter had not yet heard of her poor brother's melancholy situation, and we all seemed unwilling

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ling to damp her cheerfulness by the relation. But it was in vain that I attempted to appear cheerful; the circumstances of my unfortunate son broke through all efforts to dissemble; so that I was at last obliged to damp our mirth, by relating his misfortunes, and wishing that he might be permitted to share with us in this little interval of satisfaction. After my guests were recovered from the consternation my account had produced, I requested also, that Mr Jenkinson, a fellow-prisoner, might be admitted; and the goaler granted my request, with an air of unusual submission. The clanking of my son's irons was no sooner heard along the passage, than his sister ran impatiently to meet him; while Mr Burchell, in the mean time, asked me if my son's name was George? to which, replying in the affirmative, he still continued silent. As soon as my boy entered the room, I could perceive he regarded Mr Burchell with a look of astonishment and reverence. "Come on," cried I, "my son; though we are fallen very low, yet Providence has been pleased to grant us some small relaxation from pain. Thy sister is restored to us, and there is her deliverer: to that brave man it is that I am indebted for yet having a daughter; give him, my boy, the hand of friendship; he deserves our warmest gratitude."

My son seemed all this while regardless of what I said, and still continued fixed at respectful distance.

— "My dear brother," cried his sister, "why don't

“ don’t you thank my good deliverer ? the brave
“ should ever love each other.”

He still continued his silence and astonishment, till our guest at last perceived himself to be known ; and, assuming all his native dignity, desired my son to come forward. Never before had I seen any thing so truly majestic, as the air he assumed upon this occasion. The greatest object in the universe, says a certain philosopher, is a good man struggling with adversity ; yet there is still a greater, which is the good man that comes to relieve it. After he had regarded my son for some time with a superior air, “ I again find,” said he, “ unthinking boy, that the same crime.”—But here he was interrupted by one of the goaler’s servants, who came to inform us, that a person of distinction, who had driven into town with a chariot and several attendants, sent his respects to the gentleman that was with us, and begged to know when he should think proper to be waited upon.—“ Bid the fellow “ wait,” cried our guest, “ till I shall have leisure to “ receive him ;” and then turning to my son, “ I a- “ gain find, Sir,” proceeded he, “ that you are guilty “ of the same offence for which you once had my “ reproof, and for which the law is now preparing “ its justest punishments. You imagine, perhaps, “ that a contempt for your own life gives you a “ right to take that of another : but where, Sir, is “ the difference between a duellist, who hazards a life “ of no value, and the murderer who acts with greater “ security ? Is it any diminution of the gamester’s
“ fraud,

“ fraud, when he alledges that he has staked a coun-
“ ter?”

“ Alas, Sir,” cried I, “ whoever you are, pity the
“ poor misguided creature; for what he has done was
“ in obedience to a deluded mother, who, in the bit-
“ terness of her resentment, required him, upon her
“ blessing, to avenge her quarrel. Here, Sir, is the
“ letter, which will serve to convince you of her im-
“ prudence, and diminish his guilt.”

He took the letter, and hastily read it over. “ This,”
says he, “ though not a perfect excuse, is such a pa-
“ liation of his fault, as induces me to forgive him.
“ And now, Sir,” continued he, kindly taking my son
by the hand, “ I see you are surprised at finding me
“ here; but I have often visited prisons upon occasions
“ less interesting. I am now come to see justice done
“ a worthy man, for whom I have the most sincere
“ esteem. I have long been a disguised spectator of
“ thy father’s benevolence. I have, at his little
“ dwelling, enjoyed respect uncontaminated by flat-
“ tery; and have received that happiness that courts
“ could not give, from the amusing simplicity round his
“ fire-side. My nephew has been apprised of my in-
“ tentions of coming here, and I find is arrived: it
“ would be wronging him and you to condemn him
“ without examination: if there be injury, there shall
“ be redress; and this I may say, without boasting,
“ that none have ever taxed the injustice of Sir Wil-
“ liam Thornhill.”

We now found the personage whom we had so long entertained as an harmless amusing companion, was no other than the celebrated Sir William Thornhill, to whose virtues and singularities scarce any were strangers. The poor Mr Burchell was in reality a man of large fortune and great interest, to whom senates listened with applause, and whom party heard with conviction; who was the friend of his country, but loyal to his king. My poor wife, recollecting her former familiarity, seemed to shrink with apprehension; but Sophia, who, a few moments before, thought him her own, now perceiving the immense distance to which he was removed by fortune, was unable to conceal her tears.

"Ah, Sir," cried my wife with a piteous aspect,
"how is it possible that I can ever have your forgive-
"ness? the flights you received from me the last time
"I had the honour of seeing you at our house, and
"the jokes which I audaciously threw out; these
"jokes, Sir, I fear, can never be forgiven."

"My dear good lady," returned he, with a smile,
"if you had your joke, I had my answer: I'll leave it
"to all the company if mine were not as good as
"yours. To say the truth, I know nobody whom I
"am disposed to be angry with at present, but the fel-
"low who so frightened my little girl here. I had not
"even time to examine the rascal's person, so as to
"describe him in an advertisement. Can you tell me,
"Sophia, my dear, whether you should know him a-
"gain?"

"Indeed,

"Indeed, Sir," replied she, "I can't be positive;
" yet now I recollect he had a large mark over one
" of his eye brows." "I ask pardon, Madam," inter-
rupted Jenkinson, who was by, "but be so good as to
" inform me if the fellow wore his own red hair?"—
"Yes, I think so," cried Sophia.—"And did your
" Honour," continued he, turning to Sir William,
" observe the length of his legs?"—"I can't be sure
" of their length," cried the Baronet, "but I am
" convinced of their swiftness; for he out-ran me,
" which is what I thought few men in the kingdom
" could have done."—"Please your Honour," cri-
ed Jenkinson, "I know the man: it is certainly
" the same; the best runner in England; he has beat-
" en Pinwire of Newcastle: Timothy Baxter is his
" name; I know him perfectly, and the very place
" of his retreat this moment. If your Honour will
" bid Mr Goaler let two of his men go with me, I'll
" engage to produce him to you in an hour at far-
" thest." Upon this the goaler was called, who instant-
ly appearing, Sir William demanded if he knew him?
"Yes, please your Honour," replied the goaler, "I
" know Sir William Thornhill well; and every body
" that knows any thing of him, will desire to know
" more of him."—"Well, then," said the Baronet,
" my request is, that you will permit this man and
" two of your servants to go upon a message, by my
" authority; and, as I am in the commission of the
" peace, I undertake to secure you."—"Your pro-
" mise is sufficient," replied the other; "and you

" may, at a minute's warning, send them over England, whenever your Honour thinks fit."

In pursuance of the goaler's compliance, Jenkinson was dispatched in search of Timothy Baxter, while we were amused with the affiduity of our youngest boy Bill, who had just come in, and climbed up to Sir William's neck in order to kiss him. His mother was immediately going to chastise his familiarity; but the worthy man prevented her; and taking the child, all ragged as he was, upon his knee, "What, Bill, "you chubby rogue," cried he, "do you remember "your old friend Burchell? and Dick, too, my honest "veteran, are you here? you shall find I have not for "got you." So saying, he gave each a large piece of gingerbread, which the poor fellows eat very heartily, as they had got that morning but a very scanty breakfast.

We now sat down to dinner, which was almost cold; but previously, my arm still continuing painful, Sir William wrote a prescription, for he had made the study of physic his amusement, and was more than moderately skilled in the profession: this being sent to an apothecary who lived in the place, my arm was dressed, and I found almost instantaneous relief. We were waited upon at dinner by the goaler himself, who was willing to do our guest all the honour in his power. But before we had well dined, another message was brought from his nephew, desiring permission to appear, in order to vindicate his innocence and honour; with which request the Baronet complied; and desired Mr. Thornhill to be introduced.

C H A P. XXXI.

Former benevolence now repaid with unexpected interest.

MR THORNHILL made his entrance with a smile, which he seldom wanted, and was going to embrace his uncle, which the other repulsed with an air of disdain. "No fawning, Sir, at present," cried the Baronet, with a look of severity: "the only way to my heart is by the road of honour; but here I only see complicated instances of falsehood, cowardice, and oppression. How is it, Sir, that this poor man, for whom I know you professed a friendship, is used thus hardly? His daughter vilely seduced, as a recompence for his hospitality; and he himself thrown into a prison, perhaps but for resenting the insult? His son, too, whom you feared to face as a man—"

"Is it possible, Sir," interrupted his nephew, "that my uncle could object that as a crime, which his repeated instructions alone have persuaded me to—a void?"

"Your rebuke," cried Sir William, "is just; you have acted, in this instance, prudently and well, though not quite as your father would have done."

“ My brother, indeed, was the soul of honour: but
“ thou—yes, you have acted in this instance per-
“ fectly right, and it has my warmest approbation.”

“ And I hope,” said his nephew, “ that the rest of
“ my conduct will not be found to deserve censure. I
“ appeared, Sir, with this gentleman’s daughter at
“ some places of public amusement: thus, what
“ was levity, scandal called by a harsher name;
“ and it was reported that I had debauched her. I
“ waited on her father in person, willing to clear the
“ thing to his satisfaction, and he received me only
“ with insult and abuse. As for the rest, with regard
“ to his being here, my attorney and steward can best
“ inform you, as I commit the management of busi-
“ ness entirely to them. If he has contracted debts,
“ and is unwilling, or even unable to pay them, it is
“ their busines to proceed in this manner; and I see
“ no hardship or injustice in pursuing the most legal
“ means of redress.”

“ If this,” cried Sir William, “ be as you have
“ stated it, there is nothing unpardonable in your of-
“ fence; and though your conduct might have been
“ more generous, in not suffering this gentleman to
“ be oppressed by subordinate tyranny, yet it has been
“ at least equitable.”

“ He cannot contradict a single particular,” replied
the Squire; “ I defy him to do so; and several of
“ my servants are ready to attest what I say. Thus,
“ Sir,” continued he, finding that I was silent, for in
fact I could not contradict him, “ thus, Sir, my own
“ innocence

“innocence is vindicated ; but though, at your in-
“treaty, I am ready to forgive this gentleman every-
“other offence, yet his attempts to lessen me in your
“esteem excite a resentment that I cannot govern ;
“and this too, at a time when his son was actually
“preparing to take away my life : this, I say, was
“such guilt, that I am determined to let the law take
“its course. I have here the challenge that was sent
“me, and two witnesses to prove it ; one of my ser-
“vants has been wounded dangerously ; and even
“though my uncle himself should dissuade me, which
“I know he will not, yet I will see public justice done,
“and he shall suffer for it.”

“Thou monster,” cried my wife, “hast thou not
“had vengeance enough already, but must my poor
“boy feel thy cruelty ? I hope that good Sir William
“will protect us ; for my son is as innocent as a
“child ; I am sure he is, and never did harm to
“man.”

“Madam,” replied the good man, “your wishes
“for his safety are not greater than mine ; but I am
“sorry to find his guilt too plain ; and if my nephew
“perfests——” But the appearance of Jenkinson
and the goaler’s two servants now called off our at-
tention, who entered, hauling in a tall man, very gen-
teelly dressed, and answering the description already
given of the ruffian who had carried off my daughter.
—“Here,” cried Jenkinson, pulling him in, “here
“we have him ; and if ever there was a candidate
“for Tyburn, this is one.”

The

The moment Mr Thornhill perceived the prisoner, and Jenkinson who had him in custody, he seemed to shrink back with terror. His face became pale with conscious guilt, and he would have withdrawn; but Jenkinson, who perceived his design, stopped him.—

“ What, Squire,” cried he, “ are you ashamed of your two old acquaintances, Jenkinson and Baxter?”

“ But this is the way that all great men forget their friends, though I am resolved we will not forget you. Our prisoner, please your Honour,” continued he, turning to Sir William, “ has already confessed all. This is the gentleman reported to be so dangerously wounded. He declares, that it was Mr Thornhill who first put him upon this affair: that he gave him the clothes he now wears, to appear like a gentleman, and furnished him with the post-chaise. The plan was laid between them, that he should carry off the young lady to a place of safety, and that there he should threaten and terrify her; but Mr Thornhill was to come in, in the meantime, as if by accident, to her rescue, and that they should fight a while, and then he was to run off; by which Mr Thornhill would have the better opportunity of gaining her affections himself, under the character of her defender.”

Sir William remembered the coat to have been frequently worn by his nephew; and all the rest the prisoner himself confirmed by a more circumstantial account; concluding, that Mr Thornhill had often de-

clared

clared to him, that he was in love with both sisters at the same time.

“Heavens!” cried Sir William, “what a viper have I been fostering in my bosom! And so fond of public justice too as he seemed to be! But he shall have it: secure him, Mr Goaler;—yet hold; I fear there is not legal evidence to detain him.”

Upon this, Mr Thornhill, with the utmost humility, intreated, that two such abandoned wretches might not be admitted as evidences against him, but that his servants should be examined.—“Your servants!” replied Sir William, “wretch, call them yours no longer: but come, let us hear what those fellows have to say; let his butler be called.”

When the butler was introduced, he soon perceived by his former master’s looks, that all his power was now over. “Tell me,” cried Sir William, sternly, “have you ever seen your master and that fellow dressed up in his clothes, in company together?” “Yes, please your Honour,” cried the butler, “a thousand times: he was the man that always brought him his ladies.”—“How,” interrupted young Mr Thornhill, “this to my face!”—“Yes,” replied the butler, “or to any man’s face. To tell you a truth, Mr Thornhill, I never either loved you, or liked you; and I don’t care if I tell you now a piece of my mind.”—“Now then,” cried Jenkins, “tell his Honour whether you know any thing of me.”—“I can’t say,” replied the butler, “that I know much good of you. The night that

“gentleman’s.

“ gentleman’s daughter was deluded to our house,
“ you were one of them.” — “ So then,” cried Sir
William, “ I find you have brought a very fine wit-
“ ness to prove your innocence: thou stain to huma-
“ nity! to associate with such wretches! But,” (con-
tinuing his examination,) “ you tell me, Mr Butler,
“ that this was the person who brought him this old
“ gentleman’s daughter.” — “ No, please your Ho-
“ nour,” replied the butler; “ he did not bring her,
“ for the Squire himself undertook that business; but
“ he brought the priest that pretended to marry
“ them.” — “ It is but too true,” cried Jenkinson;
“ I cannot deny it; that was the employment assign-
“ ed me; and I confess it, to my confusion.”

“ Good heavens!” exclaimed the Baronet, “ how
“ every new discovery of his villainy alarms me! All
“ his guilt is now too plain; and I find his present
“ prosecution was dictated by tyranny, cowardice,
“ and revenge. At my request, Mr Goaler, set this
“ young officer, now your prisoner, free, and trust to
“ me for the consequences. I’ll make it my business
“ to set the affair in a proper light to my friend, the
“ magistrate who has committed him. But where is
“ the unfortunate young lady herself? Let her ap-
“ pear, to confront this wretch; I long to know by
“ what arts he has seduced her. Intreat her to come
“ in.—Where is she?”

“ Ah, Sir,” said I, “ that question stings me to the
“ heart: I was once, indeed, happy in a daughter;
“ but her miseries——” Another interruption here
prevented

prevented me; for who should make her appearance but Miss Arabella Wilmot, who was next day to have been married to Mr Thornhill. Nothing could equal her surprise at seeing Sir William and his nephew here before her; for her arrival was quite accidental. It happened, that she and the old gentleman her father were passing through the town, on their way to her aunt's, who had insisted that her nuptials with Mr Thornhill should be consummated at her house; but stopping for refreshment, they put up at an inn at the other end of the town. It was there from the window that the young lady happened to observe one of my little boys playing in the street; and instantly sending a footman to bring the child to her, she learned from him some account of our misfortunes; but was still kept ignorant of young Mr Thornhill's being the cause. Though her father made several remonstrances on the impropriety of going to a prison to visit us, yet they were ineffectual; she desired the child to conduct her; which he did; and it was thus she surprised us at a juncture so unexpected.

Nor can I go on, without a reflection on those accidental meetings, which, though they happen every day, seldom excite our surprize but upon some extraordinary occasion. To what a fortuitous concurrence do we not owe every pleasure and convenience of our lives? How many seeming accidents must unite before we can be cloathed or fed? The peasant must be disposed to labour, the shower must fall, the wind fill

the

the merchant's sail, or numbers must want the usual supply.

We all continued silent for some moments, while my charming pupil, which was the name I generally gave this young lady, united in her looks compassion and astonishment, which gave new finishings to her beauty. "Indeed, my dear Mr Thornhill," cried she to the Squire, who she supposed was come here to succour and not to oppress us, "I take it a little unkindly, that you should come here without me, or never inform me of the situation of a family so dear to us both: you know I should take as much pleasure in contributing to the relief of my reverend old master here, whom I shall ever esteem, as you can. But I find that, like your uncle, you take a pleasure in doing good in secret."

"He find pleasure in doing good!" cried Sir William, interrupting her. "No, my dear; his pleasures are as base as he is. You see in him, Madam, as complete a villain as ever disgraced humanity. A wretch, who, after having deluded this poor man's daughter, after plotting against the innocence of her sister, has thrown the father into prison, and the eldest son into fetters, because he had courage to face his betrayer. And give me leave, Madam, new to congratulate you upon an escape from the embraces of such a monster."

"O goodness!" cried the lovely girl, "how have I been deceived! Mr Thornhill informed me for certain, that this gentleman's eldest son, Captain Primrose,

“ Primrose, was gone off to America with his new-married lady.”

“ My sweetest Miss,” cried my wife, “ he has told you nothing but falsehoods. My son George never left the kingdom, nor never was married. Though you have forsaken him, he has always loved you too well to think of any body else; and I have heard him say, he would die a bachelor for your sake.” She then proceeded to expatiate upon the sincerity of her son’s passion; she set his duel with Mr Thornhill in a proper light; from thence she made a rapid digression to the Squire’s debaucheries, his pretended marriages, and ended with a most insulting picture of his cowardice.

“ Good heavens!” cried Miss Wilmot, “ how very near I have been to the brink of ruin! But how great is my pleasure to have escaped it! Ten thousand falsehoods has this gentleman told me! He had at last art enough to persuade me, that my promise to the only man I esteemed was no longer binding, since he had been unfaithful. By his falsehoods, I was taught to detest one equally brave and generous.”

But by this time my son was freed from the incumbrances of justice, as the person supposed to be wounded was detected to be an impostor. Mr Jenkinson also, who had acted as his valet de chambre, had dressed up his hair, and furnished him with whatever was necessary to make a genteel appearance. He now, therefore, entered, handsomely dressed in his

regimentals ; and, without vanity, (for I am above it,) he appeared as handsome a fellow as ever wore a military dress. As he entered, he made Miss Wilmot a modest and distant bow, for he was not as yet acquainted with the change which the eloquence of his mother had wrought in his favour. But no decorums could restrain the impatience of his blushing mistress to be forgiven. Her tears, her looks, all contributed to discover the real sensations of her heart, for having forgotten her former promise, and having suffered herself to be deluded by an impostor. My son appeared amazed at her condescension, and could scarce believe it real. — “Sure, Madam,” cried he, “this is but delusion ! I can never have merited this ! To be blest thus, is to be too happy.” — “No, Sir,” replied she, “I have been deceived, basely deceived, else nothing could have ever made me unjust to my promise. You know my friendship ; you have long known it ; but forget what I have done ; and, as you once had my warmest vows of constancy, you shall now have them repeated ; and be assured, that if your Arabella cannot be yours, she shall never be another’s.” — “And no other’s you shall be,” cried Sir William, “if I have any influence with your father.”

This hint was sufficient for my son Moses, who immediately flew to the inn where the old gentleman was, to inform him of every circumstance that had happened. But, in the mean time, the Squire perceiving that he was on every side undone, now finding that

that no hopes were left from flattery or dissimulation, concluded, that his wifest way would be to turn and face his pursuers. Thus, laying aside all shame, he appeared the open hardy villain. "I find, then," cried he, "that I am to expect no justice here; but I am resolved it shall be done me. You shall know, " Sir, turning to Sir William, "I am no longer a poor dependant upon your favours. I scorn them. Nothing can keep Miss Wilmot's fortune from me, which, I thank her father's affidity, is pretty large. The articles, and a bond for her fortune, are signed, and safe in my possession. It was her fortune, not her person, that induced me to wish for this match; and, possessed of the one, let who will take the other."

This was an alarming blow: Sir William was sensible of the justice of his claims, for he had been instrumental in drawing up the marriage-articles himself. Miss Wilmot, therefore, perceiving that her fortune was irretrievably lost, turning to my son, she asked, if the loss of fortune could lessen her value to him. "Though fortune," said she, "is out of my power, at least I have my hand to give.

"And that, Madam," cried her real lover, "was indeed all that you ever had to give, at least all that I ever thought worth the acceptance. And I now protest, my Arabella, by all that's happy, your want of fortune this moment increases my pleasure, as it serves to convince my sweet girl of my sincerity."

Mr Wilmot now entering, he seemed not a little pleased at the danger his daughter had just escaped; and readily consented to a dissolution of the match. But finding that her fortune, which was secured to Mr Thornhill by bond, would not be given up, nothing could exceed his disappointment. He saw now that his money must all go to enrich one who had no fortune of his own. He could bear his being a rascal, but to want an equivalent to his daughter's fortune was wormwood. He sat, therefore, for some minutes, employed in the most mortifying speculations, till Sir William attempted to lessen his anxiety.—

“ I must confess, Sir,” cried he, “ that your present disappointment does not entirely displease me. Your immoderate passion for wealth is now justly punished. But, though the young lady cannot be rich, she has still a competence sufficient to give content. Here you see an honest young soldier, who is willing to take her without fortune; they have long loved each other; and for the friendship I bear his father, my interest shall not be wanting in his promotion. Leave then, that ambition which disappoints you, and for once admit that happiness which courts your acceptance.”

“ Sir William,” replied the old gentleman, “ be assured I never yet forced her inclinations, nor will I now. If she still continues to love this young gentleman, let her have him, with all my heart. There is still, thank Heaven, some fortune left, and your promise will make it something more. Only

* Only let my old friend here (meaning me) give
" me a promise of settling six thousand pounds upon
" my girl if ever he should come to his fortune, and I
" am ready this night to be the first to join them to-
" gether."

As it now remained with me to make the young couple happy, I readily gave a promise of making the settlement he required, which to one who had so little expectations as I, was no great favour. We had now therefore the satisfaction of seeing them fly into each other's arms in a transport. "After all my misfortunes," cried my son George, "to be thus rewarded! Sure this is more than I could ever have presumed to hope for. To be possessed of all that's good, and after such an interval of pain! My warmest wishes could never rise so high!"— "Yes, my George," returned his lovely bride, "now let the wretch take my fortune; since you are happy without it, so am I. O what an exchange have I made, from the basest of men, to the dearest, best!—Let him enjoy our fortune; I can now be happy even in indigence."— "And I promise you," cried the Squire, with a malicious grin, "that I shall be very happy with what you despise." Hold, hold, Sir," cried Jenkinson, "there are two words to that bargain. As for that lady's fortune, Sir, you shall never touch a single stiver of it. Pray your honour," continued he to Sir William, "can the Squire have this lady's fortune if he be married to another?"— "How can you

“ make such a simple demand ?” replied the baronet,
“ undoubtedly he cannot.”——“ I am sorry for
“ that,” cried Jenkinson ; “ for as this gentleman
“ and I have been old fellow-sporters, I have a
“ friendship for him. But I must declare, well as I
“ love him, that his contract is not worth a tobacco-
“ stopper, for he is married already.”——“ You lie
“ like a rascal,” returned the Squire, who seemed
roused by this insult ; “ I never was legally mar-
“ ried to any woman.”——“ Indeed, begging your
“ Honour’s pardon,” replied the other, “ you were ;
“ and I hope you will show a proper return of friend-
“ ship to your own honest Jenkinson, who brings you
“ a wife, and, if the company restrain their curiosi-
“ ty a few minutes, they shall see her.”——So say-
ing, he went off with his usual celerity, and left
us all unable to form any probable conjecture as to
his design.——“ Ay, let him go,” cried the Squire,
“ whatever else I may have done, I defy him there.
“ I am too old now to be frightened with squibs.”

“ I am surprised,” said the Baronet, “ what the
“ fellow can intend by this. Some low piece of hu-
“ mour, I suppose ?”——“ Perhaps, Sir,” replied I,
“ he may have a more serious meaning. For, when
“ we reflect on the various schemes this gentleman
“ has laid to seduce innocence, perhaps some one,
“ more artful than the rest, has been found able to
“ deceive him. When we consider what numbers
“ he has ruined, how many parents now feel with
“ anguish the infamy and the contamination which
“ he

“ he has brought into their families, it would not
“ surprise me, if some one of them——Amaze-
“ ment! Do I see my lost daughter! Do I hold her!
“ It is, it is my life, my happiness. I thought thee
“ lost, my Olivia, yet still I hold thee——and still
“ thou shalt live to bless me.”——The warmest tran-
sports of the fondest lover were not greater than
mine, when I saw him introduce my child, and held
my daughter in my arms, whose silence only spoke
her raptures. “ And art thou returned to me, my
“ darling,” cried I, “ to be my comfort in age?”
“ That she is,” cried Jenkinson, “ and make much
“ of her; for she is your own honourable child, and
“ as honest a woman as any in the whole room, let
“ the other be who she will. And as for you, Squire,
“ as sure as you stand there, this young lady is your
“ lawful wedded wife. And, to convince you that
“ I speak nothing but truth, here is the licence
“ by which you were married together.” So say-
ing, he put the licence into the Baronet’s hands,
who read it, and found it perfect in every respect.
“ And now, gentlemen,” continued he, “ I find you
“ are surprised at all this; but a few words will ex-
“ plain the difficulty. That there Squire of renown,
“ for whom I have a great friendship, but that’s be-
“ tween ourselves, has often employed me in doing
“ odd things for him. Among the rest, he commis-
“ sioned me to procure him a false licence, and a
“ false priest, in order to deceive this young lady.
“ But, as I was very much his friend, what did I do,
“ but

“ but got a true licence, and a true priest, and married them both as fast as the cloth could make them. Perhaps you'll think it was generosity that made me do all this. But, no. To my shame I confess it, my only design was to keep the licence, and let the Squire know that I could prove it upon him whenever I thought proper, and so make him come down whenever I wanted money.” A burst of pleasure now seemed to fill the whole apartment; our joy even reached to the common room, where the prisoners themselves sympathized,

*And shook their chains
In transport and rude harmony.*

Happiness was expanded upon every face, and even Olivia's cheek seemed flushed with pleasure. To be thus restored to reputation, to friends, and fortune, at once, was a rapture sufficient to stop the progress of decay, and restore former health and vivacity. But perhaps, among all, there was not one who felt sincerer pleasure than I. Still holding the dear loved child in my arms, I asked my heart, if these transports were not delusion? “ How could you,” cried I, turning to Mr Jenkinson, “ how could you add to my miseries, by the story of her death? ” But it matters not; my pleasure at finding her again is more than a recompence for the pain.”

“ As to your question,” replied Jenkinson, “ that is easily answered. I thought the only probable means

“ of

“ of freeing you from prison was by submitting to
“ the Squire, and consenting to his marriage with
“ the other young lady. But these you had vowed
“ never to grant while your daughter was living;
“ there was, therefore, no other method to bring
“ things to bear, but by persuading you that she was
“ dead. I prevailed on your wife to join in the de-
“ ceit; and we have not had a fit opportunity of un-
“ deceiving you till now.”

In the whole assembly, now, there only appeared two faces that did not glow with transport. Mr Thornhill's assurance had entirely forsaken him: he now saw the gulf of infamy and want before him, and trembled to take the plunge. He therefore fell on his knees before his uncle, and, in a voice of piercing misery, implored compassion. Sir William was going to spurn him away; but, at my request, he raised him; and, after pausing a few moments,
“ Thy vices, crimes, and ingratitude,” cried he, “ de-
“ serve no tenderness; yet thou shalt not be entirely
“ forsaken; a bare competence shall be supplied, to
“ support the wants of life, but not its follies. This
“ young lady, thy wife, shall be put in possession of a
“ third part of that fortune which once was thine,
“ and from her tenderness alone thou art to expect
“ any extraordinary supplies for the future.” He was going to express his gratitude for such kindness in a set speech; but the Baronet prevented him, by bidding him not aggravate his meanness, which was already but too apparent. He ordered him at the same

same time to be gone, and from all his former domestics to choose one, such as he should think proper, which was all that should be granted to attend him.

As soon as he left us, Sir William very politely stepped up to his new niece with a smile, and wished her joy. His example was followed by Miss Wilmot and her father; my wife too kissed her daughter with much affection, as, to use her own expression, she was now made an honest woman of. Sophia and Moses followed in turn, and even our benefactor Jenkinson desired to be admitted to that honour. Our satisfaction seemed scarce capable of increase. Sir William, whose greatest pleasure was in doing good, now looked round, with a countenance open as the sun, and saw nothing but joy in the looks of all, except that of my daughter Sophia, who, for some reasons we could not comprehend, did not seem perfectly satisfied. "I think now," cried he, with a smile, "that all the company, except one or two, seem perfectly happy. There only remains an act of justice for me to do. You are sensible, Sir," continued he, turning to me, "of the obligations we both owe Mr Jenkinson; and it is but just we should both reward him for it. Miss Sophia will, I am sure, make him very happy; and he shall have from me five hundred pounds as her fortune; and upon this, I am sure, they can live very comfortably together. Come, Miss Sophia, what say you to this match of my making? Will

" you

“ you have him ?” —— My poor girl seemed almost sinking into her mother’s arms at the hideous proposal. —— “ Have him, Sir,” cried she faintly, “ No, Sir, never.” —— “ What ?” cried he again, “ not have Mr. Jenkinson, your benefactor, an handsome young fellow, with five hundred pounds, and good expectations !” —— “ I beg, Sir,” returned she, scarce able to speak, “ that you will desist, and not make me so very wretched.” —— “ Was ever such obstinacy known,” cried he again, “ to refuse a man whom the family has such infinite obligations to, who has preserved your sister, and who has five hundred pounds !” “ What ! not have him !” —— “ No, Sir, never,” replied she angrily ; “ I’d sooner die first.” —— “ If that be the case then,” cried he, “ if you will not have him — I think I must have you myself.” And so saying, he caught her to his breast with ardour. “ My loveliest, my most sensible of girls,” cried he, “ how could you ever think your own Bur-chell could deceive you, or that Sir William Thornhill could ever cease to admire a mistress that loved him for himself alone ? I have, for some years, sought for a woman, who, a stranger to my fortune, could think that I had merit as a man. After having tried in vain, even amongst the pert and the ugly, how great, at last, must be my rapture, to have made a conquest over such sense and such heavenly beauty !” Then turning to Jenkinson, “ As I cannot, Sir, part with this young lady myself, for she

“ she has taken a fancy to the cut of my face, all the
“ recompence I can make is to give you her fortune ;
“ and you may call upon my steward to-morrow, for
“ five hundred pounds.” Thus we had all our com-
pliments to repeat, and Lady Thornhill underwent
the same round of ceremony that her sister had done
before. In the mean time, Sir William’s gentleman
appeared, to tell us that the equipages were ready to
carry us to the inn, where every thing was prepared
for our reception. My wife and I led the van, and
left those gloomy mansions of sorrow. The generous
Baronet ordered forty pounds to be distributed among
the prisoners ; and Mr Wilmot, induced by his exam-
ple, gave half that sum. We were received below by
the shouts of the villagers, and I saw and shook by the
hand two or three of my honest parishioners, who
were among the number. They attended us to our
inn, where a sumptuous entertainment was provided,
and coarser provisions distributed in great quantities
among the populace.

After supper, as my spirits were exhausted by the
alternation of pleasure and pain which they had sus-
tained during the day, I asked permission to withdraw ;
and, leaving the company in the midst of their mirth,
as soon as I found myself alone, I poured out my
heart in gratitude to the Giver of joy as well as of
sorrow, and then slept undisturbed till morning.

C H A P. XXXII.

The Conclusion.

THE next morning, as soon as I awaked, I found my eldest son sitting by my bed-side, who came to increase my joy with another turn of fortune in my favour. First having released me from the settlement that I had made the day before in his favour, he let me know, that my merchant who had failed in town, was arrested at Antwerp, and there had given up effects to a much greater amount than what was due to his creditors. My boy's generosity pleased me almost as much as this unlooked-for good fortune. But I had some doubts whether I ought in justice to accept his offer. While I was pondering upon this, Sir William entered the room, to whom I communicated my doubts. His opinion was, that, as my son was already possessed of a very affluent fortune by his marriage, I might accept his offer without any hesitation. His business, however, was to inform me, that as he had the night before sent for the licences, and expected them every hour, he hoped that I would not refuse my assistance in making all the company happy that morning. A footman entered while we were speaking, to tell us that the messenger was returned; and as I was by this time ready, I went down, where I found the whole company as merry as affluence and innocence could make them. However, as they were now preparing for a very solemn ceremony, their

laughter entirely displeased me. I told them of the grave, becoming, and sublime deportment they should assume upon this mystical occasion, and read them two homilies and a thesis of my own composing, in order to prepare them; yet they still seemed perfectly refractory and ungovernable. Even as we were going along to church, to which I led the way, all gravity had quite forsaken them, and I was often tempted to turn back in indignation. In church a new dilemma arose, which promised no easy solution. This was, which couple should be married first; my son's bride warmly insisted, that Lady Thornhill (that was to be) should take the lead; but this the other refused with equal ardour, protesting she would not be guilty of such rudeness for the world. The argument was supported for some time between both, with equal obstinacy and good breeding. But as I stood all this time with my book ready, I was at last quite tired of the contest; and, shutting it, "I perceive," cried I, "that none of you have a mind to be married, and I "think we had as good go back again; for I suppose "there will be no business done here to-day."— This at once reduced them to reason. The Baronet and his Lady were first married, and then my son and his lovely partner.

I had previously, that morning, given orders that a coach should be sent for my honest neighbour Flamborough and his family; by which means, upon our return to the inn, we had the pleasure of finding the two Miss Flambourghs alighted before us. Mr Jenkins gave his hand to the eldest, and my son Moses

led up the other ; (and I have since found, that he has taken a real liking to the girl, and my consent and bounty he shall have, whenever he thinks proper to demand them.). We were no sooner returned to the inn, but numbers of my parishioners, hearing of my success, came to congratulate me ; but among the rest were those who rose to rescue me, and whom I formerly rebuked with such sharpness. I told the story to Sir William, my son-in-law, who went out and reproved them with great severity ; but, finding them quite disheartened by his harsh reproof, he gave them half a guinea a-piece to drink his health, and raise their dejected spirits.

Soon after this, we were called to a very genteel entertainment, which was dressed by Mr Thornhill's cook. And it may not be improper to observe, with respect to that gentleman, that he now resides in quality of companion at a relation's house, being very well liked, and seldom sitting at the side-table, except when there is no room at the other ; for they make no stranger of him. His time is pretty much taken up in keeping his relation, who is a little melancholy, in spirits, and in learning to blow the French-horn. My eldest daughter, however, still remembers him with regret ; and she has even told me, though I make a great secret of it, that when he reforms, she may be brought to relent. But to return, for I am not apt to digress thus, when we were to sit down to dinner, our ceremonies were going to be renewed. The question was, whether my eldest daughter, as being a matron, should not sit above the two young brides ? But the

debate

debate was cut short by my son George, who proposed, that the company should sit indiscriminately, — every gentleman by his lady. This was received with great approbation by all, excepting my wife, who, I could perceive, was not perfectly satisfied, as she expected to have had the pleasure of sitting at the head of the table, and carving all the meat, for all the company. But notwithstanding this, it is impossible to describe our good humour. I can't say whether we had more wit amongst us now than usual; but I am certain we had more laughing, which answered the end as well. One jest I particularly remember. Old Mr Wilmot drinking to Moses, whose head was turned another way, my son replied, "Madam, I thank you." — Upon which the old gentleman, winking upon the rest of the company, observed, that he was thinking of his mistress. At which jest I thought the two Miss Flamboroughs would have died with laughing. As soon as dinner was over, according to my old custom, I requested that the table might be taken away, to have the pleasure of seeing all my family assembled once more by a cheerful fire side. My two little ones sat upon each knee, the rest of the company by their partners. I had nothing now on this side the grave to wish for; all my cares were over; my pleasure was unspeakable. It now only remained, that my gratitude in good fortune should exceed my former submission in adversity.



THE END.